BENGAL

DISTRICT

GAZETTEERS

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JESSORE.

BY

L. S. S. O'MALLEY,

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GAZETTEER

OF THE

JESSORE DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

General Description. THE district of Jessore, which forms part of the Presidency Division, is situated between 22° 47′ and 23° 47′ north latitude and between 88° 40′ and 89° 50′ east longitude. It extends over 2,925 square miles, and contains a population of 1,758,264 persons as ascertained at the census of 1911. Its area is slightly greater than that of Lincoln, and it contains nearly as many inhabitants as the county of Lancaster.* The principal town and the administrative headquarters of the district is Jessore, situated on the Bhairab river in 23° 10′ N. and 89° 13′ E.

Boundaries. Jessore is bounded on the east by the Farīdpur district, on the north and west by Nadiā, and on the south by the 24-Parganas and Khulnā. On the east and north-east the Garāi or Madhumatī river constitutes a natural boundary for a considerable distance.

Configuration. The district forms part of the delta between the Hooghly and the Padmā, and its configuration is that characteristic of deltaic country. It consists of a wide alluvial plain intersected by numerous rivers, which again are connected by interlacing cross-channels, called *khāls.* These rivers formerly received their supply of water from the Ganges (Padmā) and its affluents or spill-channels, and the north-west of the district was gradually raised above flood-level by their periodical inundations. Most of the rivers, however, have silted up, losing their connection with the parent stream and becoming year by year more shallow, the result being that, for the greater part of the year, their channels contain no flowing water, but a series of stagnant pools, which are flushed only in the rains. In the south, however, where the country

* The Statesmans's Year Book, 1911.

merges into the swamps of the lower delta, the rivers are tidal and not dependent for their supply on the Ganges floods.

Owing to the silting up of its waterways, the district now exemplifies two stages in the process of land formation. In a small tract to the north and north-east, the elevation of the land by the deposit of silt is still in progress. To the north the Kumār carries off the flood water of the Mātābhāngā, itself an affluent of the Ganges; to the north-east flood water passes down the Garāi, another affluent or spill-channel of that river. It is true that during the period of low water in the Ganges, *i.e.*, from November to June, little, if any, water passes into these channels from the parent stream, but this does not affect the fact that they are still operative in heightening the land surface. In the remainder of the district the process of land formation has ceased or is in suspension. Here the water-courses, such as the Lower Bhairab, the Chitrā and the Kabadak, now receive no flood water from the Ganges. Their channels are far too large for their remaining function as receptacles of the local drainage, and the very small slope which is characteristic of the country tends to cause them to become choked with aquatic vegetation, so that the flow of water is extremely sluggish. It is only the connection with the parent stream, however, which has been closed or silted up, and the channels are quite competent to receive local drainage and to convey it to tidal waters.

Natural divisions. The district falls naturally into two main divisions with distinctive physical characteristics, the country to the north and west being above flood-level and fairly dry, while the south and south-east are low-lying and dotted with large marshes. If a line be drawn from Keshabpur, on the Harihar river south of the town of Jessore, to Muhammadpur on the Madhumatī, it will be found that the lands which lie to the north and west of the line are generally high, with a slightly sandy soil, and free from inundation. The rivers here are beyond the reach of the tides, and, except during the height of the rains, remain within the bounds of their high banks. The general fall in the level of the country is from north-west to south-east, and the river channels and lines of drainage follow this direction. This part of the district now receives little, if any, flood water from the Ganges, and the channels have greatly deteriorated and are full of weeds; they are useful only for local drainage, the volume of which is small and in no proportion to their natural capacity of discharge. The tract to the south and south-east of this imaginary line is intersected by channels in all directions, and there are numerous swamps, which render the country impassable on foot,

except in the dry season. The rivers flow backwards and forwards according to the tides, and for some months in the year the whole country is practically under water. There is no definite line of drainage, and the water, when it does drain away, finds its way out in whatever direction local circumstances may determine.

The scenery in these two tracts varies greatly. In the north and west the country is generally well cleared and sparsely wooded. The extensive cultivation of the date-palm for the purpose of sugar manufacture relieves the monotony of wide expanses of rice fields, but its stunted growth and scanty foliage prevents its taking the place of forest trees in the landscape. Scattered here and there are a few low plains, where *āman* rice may be cultivated; for the most part, however, *āus* is the variety which can best be cultivated, and in the cold season the usual cold-weather crops grow in luxuriance. The villages and towns in this tract are comparatively large, and there is a prosperous and comfortable air about the people and their homes. In the south-west the country is more sparsely populated and thinly wooded, but the river banks are high and have the prosperous appearance of more favoured tracts. The south-east, where the rivers still have a flowing current, is the most prosperous part of the district, and large villages are found along some of the rivers, such as the Bhairab, the Chitrā and the Nabagangā, the banks of which are well wooded. Rice grows in abundance, but in some places, where the *bils* do not dry up at any time during the twelve months, there are large areas with no sign of cultivation. Most of the *bils* are, however, silting up and many have been reclaimed and brought under cultivation. Scenery.

In order to give a comprehensive account of the river system of Jessore, it is necessary to refer to the general river system of the lower portion of the Gangetic delta, of which it forms an integral part, and to describe its past history. Proceeding from west to east, four great rivers take off from the Ganges in this part of the delta, viz., the Bhāgīrathī, the Jalangī, the Mātābhāngā, and the Garāi, which in its lower reaches is known as the Madhumatī. Of these rivers and their history the following account is extracted from the *Report of the Drainage Committee, Bengal, 1907.* RIVER SYSTEM.

"These four channels constitute the main arteries traversing the whole tract from north to south through which so much of the water of the Ganges flows as does not proceed down the Padmā towards Goalundo. Between these arteries are various distributary streams running generally from north-west to south-east

(although the direction is now the reverse on the eastern side of the Jessore district), and falling through a network of channels by independent mouths into the Bay of Bengal. It is through these connecting links that the water of the Ganges, spreading over the delta, has already raised it, or is in course of so doing. The process on the western side is now more or less an accomplished fact; on the east it is in progress, and in the centre it is gradually ceasing. It is between the Mātābhāngā on the west and the Madhumatī on the east that the area *par excellence* of decaying rivers lies. Here the rivers Kumār, Nabagangā, Lower Bhairab and Ichhāmatī still remain as offshoots from the Mātābhāngā towards the south-east, until (with the exception of the Ichhāmatī) they encounter in their lower reaches the waters of the Garāi and Madhumatī, which, coming by various cross channels of communication from the north-east give a general southward and south-westward trend to the river currents. Between the Kumār, Nabagangā and Bhairab lie a net-work of connecting streams, of which the best known are the Chitrā, Beng, Phatki, Kabadak, Harihar and Bhadrā.

"It is evident therefore that the life of these cross streams is bound up with what we have described as the main arteries; if the latter decay, their offshoots must suffer similarly. But the whole history of the delta has been one of the gradual progress of the Ganges eastwards. When the main river, probably in the sixteenth century, quitting the Bhāgīrathī, down which it had hitherto flowed, once started eastwards, it may, in time, have successfully found its main outlet through the channels of the Jalangī, Mātābhāngā, Kumār or Nabagangā, and Garāi, but its advance was continually further east, leaving the offtakes to the west to dwindle and decay. In the early part of the last century a reflex action set in between the years 1810 and 1830. The waters of the Brahmaputra, which had formerly flowed east of the Madhupur jungle, were diverted to the west, and encountering the stream of the Ganges, threatened to push it back through its old distributaries to the west. This process was not accomplished fully, but the result was the enlargement of the Garāi, the creation of the Madhumatī (previously an insignificant *khāl*), and the diversion of the flow of drainage on the eastern side of the Jessore district from south-east to south and south-west as already mentioned. With this one exception, however, the statement as to the easterly progress of the Ganges holds good, and the result of this advance of the main stream eastwards was the diminution in bulk of the rivers taking off from it on the south. The deterioration of the

distributaries dependent upon these four rivers was the natural consequence."

The Garāi in the extreme east of the district is still connected with the Ganges. Most of the other rivers, which formerly derived their main current from the Ganges, are fast ceasing to deserve that name, for their beds are year by year growing more shallow as the process of silting up advances. They are, in fact, the remnants of rivers and pass down very little of the Ganges' flood except at the height of the rains. Their land-forming powers have almost entirely ceased, their waters being confined within high banks over which they have ceased to spill. They are thus merely local drainage channels and are steadily disappearing in consequence of the deposit of the detritus of the neighbouring land settling in their beds. In the north and east of the district, however a few of the rivers, which are not so much silted up, are clear of weeds and have a good flow throughout the year. These rivers are the Garāi or Madhumatī, the Kālīgangā and the Bānkāna, the latter two of which have improved owing to the opening up of the Hallifax Canal: on the other hand, owing to the silting up of the Muchikhāli neither the Nabaganga nor the Chitra have any flowing water during the dry weather. In the west and south-west the rivers are dead or dying, with the notable exception of the Ichhāmatī. This part of the district is intersected by the upper portion of the Nabagangā, by the Chitrā and the Bhairab, all of which are silted up and blocked with weeds, and in dry weather become merely lines of stagnant pools.

In this connection, the following remarks of the Nadiā Fever Commission of 1882 are of interest. "In this tract we have a number of dead streams which were once large rivers; these are the Bhatahi, the Kabadak or Bhairab, the Nabagangā and the Mysore Chitrā. The advantage which would accrue to numbers of villages in both Nadiā and Jessore, if these were reopened, has been pressed upon us in several quarters, and we fully admit this: we are, however, of opinion that the idea is impracticable, Mr. J. Fergusson in his paper on recent changes in the delta of the Ganges has shewn how the changes in these dead rivers occur, and why they leave their old beds and take new courses; and he aptly remarked that the course of nature in this matter can be no more interfered with than can a pendulum of 39 inches be made to beat once in two seconds of itself. It can be forced to do so for a time by the application of machinery, but, directly the pressure is removed, it will rapidly return to its normal beat. So it is with these rivers; it is their office to raise the delta by the deposition of silt, and each river flows in a

given course until it has completed its work, when it either changes its direction or dies, and a new river is opened out elsewhere. The application of various expedients may retard the operation of natural laws for a time, but eventually nature will effect her end. The rivers above alluded to are already dead; to resuscitate them is practically impossible. The cause of the change above referred to is this.

"A river runs in a given course, gradually elevating its bed and the country near it to or above the rest of the adjacent delta, until one or two things happens: namely, either the river overflows into a lower tract of country, and commences to raise the tract, or, if that part of the delta is practically levelled up and completed, the river is gradually choked up by its own sediment and dies, and a new river is opened out in some other part of the delta where the land is low and requires raising. The above rivers have followed this latter course; the delta in Nadiā and Western Jessore has been raised and practically completed, and by the gradual deposition of silt the line of drainage which was formerly from north-west to south-east is now from north-east to south. In other words, the work that had to be performed by the Bhairab, the Kabadak, the Nabagangā and the Mysore Chitrā has been completed, and the rivers have died."

The following is an account of the rivers of Jessore.

Madhumatī or Garāi.

The Madhumatī, the largest of the Jessore rivers, is a distributary of the Ganges, which it leaves near Kushtiā. The upper portion of the river, which passes along the boundary of the Jhenida and Māgurā subdivisions is known as the Garāi. The name Madhumatī (Honey-flowing) was originally given to it from below the point where the Nabagangā used to enter it, but at present the name is given to it as far north as Muhammadpur. Further south, where the stream becomes tidal, it receives the appellation of Baleswar (the young lord), while its estuary is called the Haringhātā (the deer-ford).

This river is one of the principal channels by which the Ganges discharges itself into the Bay of Bengal, but it is only since the beginning of the 19th century that it has expanded into a great waterway. In Rennell's map the river Kumār is shown as flowing across the north of what are now the districts of Nadiā, Jessore and Farīdpur, rejoining the Ganges on the other side of Farīdpur. At the point where the Garāi now receives the Kumār, the Kumār then received the Garāi, which at that time was but a cross-stream from the Ganges. A little further down, the old Kumār sent off a stream, the Barāsiā, which flowed southwards, while the Kumār

continued its eastern course towards the Ganges beyond Farīdpur. When the head of the Kumār began to silt up, the Ganges poured more and more of its waters down the Garāi, which then began to swallow up the Kumār. The Garāi, thus reinforced, continued its course down the Barāsiā, and the latter, which had hitherto been but a narrow river, proved unable to carry off this influx of water, and opened out a new western channel called the Alangkhāli (commonly spelt Ellenkhāli). These two, viz., the Barāsiā and Alangkhāli, united in a great marsh, which occupied the site of Mukīmpur *pargana*, and formed that wide stream above the confluence to which the name of Madhumatī was extended.

The inundations which occurred about Muhammadpur in the early part of the 19th century were clearly connected with the changes then going on. After a few seasons of disastrous floods, an adequate channel gradually formed and the new stream flowed more regularly; inundations on the terrible scale common a century ago have long since ceased. This comparatively recent opening of the Madhumatī channel also explains how, while the courses of the old rivers (viz., the Kumār, Bhairab, Bhadrā and Kabadak) are the boundaries of old *parganas*, the new rivers (viz., the Garāi and Madhumatī) flow almost throughout their whole course through the heart of successive *parganas*, such as Naldi, Nasratshāhi, Sātor, Mukimpur, Sultānpur, Salimābād, etc.

Fifty years ago it was anticipated that the Garāi would open out still further. In 1857 Captain Sherwill remarked :—"The Garāi is becoming broader every year, its fierce current is cutting rapidly away its banks, and in a few years it will likely absorb the greater portion, if not all, of the water from the Poddah." Again, Mr. Fergusson in 1863 considered that there was a good chance that the action of the Brahmaputra, already described, would send the Ganges down the Garāi, the Upper Kumār (*i.e.* Mātābhāngā) and the Chandana (east of the Garāi). These anticipations have not been fulfilled owing to the Padmā shifting northwards. The unfavourable position of the offtake of the Garāi caused by this shifting of the Padmā has reduced the discharge of Padmā water into it, and the river is consequently silting up in its upper reaches. There is also a belief that the bridge of the Eastern Bengal State Railway near Kushtia has also contributed to this result.

Kumār or Pāngāsī.

The northernmost river within the district is the Kumār (the young prince) or Pāngāsī (the pale one), a branch of the Mātābhāngā, which debouches from that river about 10 miles above Alamdāngā on the Eastern Bengal State Railway, and

passes into Jessore after flowing in a tortuous course for some distance through Nadiā. It flows through the district in an easterly direction and is connected with the Garāi by a cross-stream called the Muchikhāli, but the main volume of its water is carried away by the Nabagangā, into which it discharges. As late as 1820 five-sixths of the water of the Mātābhāngā made its way down the Kumār; and between that year and 1828 various attempts were made, in the interests of the Mātābhāngā, to cause its waters to quit this channel, and also a second offtake through the Pāngāsī, by placing barriers across the mouth of the Kumār and by cuts in the course of Mātābhāngā. These attempts were not successful. The offtake at Boāliā is still open, but there is little flow of water, viz., about 1½ feet at the end of the cold weather. The river is now said to be navigable by large boats in the rains only, whereas 30 years ago it was described as "a beautiful stream of clear water navigable by large vessels all the year round." During this period, it has deteriorated owing to the silting up of its offtake from the Mātābhāngā, and its bed is shallow and full of sand bars down to Bagādāngā. In its lower reaches it used to receive water from the Garāi through the Kāligangā, but this connection has also silted up. It still, however, carries off the flood discharge of the Mātābhāngā during the rains.

Muchikhāli. The Muchikhāli, formerly known as the Little Barāsiā, connects the Kumār and the Madhumatī and extends from Rāmnagar to Kāsundī. *Chars* have formed at both ends of this channel, and its bed dries up after the rains. It used to be the chief channel of communication between Jessore and Farīdpur, but within the last 15 years navigation has been impossible except in the rains. In 1898 it was proposed to remove the *chars* at a cost of over half a lakh of rupees, but the scheme was not sanctioned by Government: a fresh scheme is under consideration.

Nabagangā. The Nabagangā (New Ganges), which runs almost parallel to the Kumār, is another offshoot of the Mātābhāngā. After entering Jessore on its western boundary, it keeps a course to the east and then south-east past Jhenida. This river has long been completely closed at its head and cannot now be traced beyond a *bāor* or swamp 6 miles from its former offtake, which was 2 miles north-west of Chuādāngā in the Nadiā district. From this point to Māgurā the channel has ceased to get any supply of flood water from the Mātābhāngā, and the channel is covered with thick weeds. Boat traffic is impracticable beyond Jhenida, while between Jhenida and Mágurā it is navigable only for about three months in the year. Its lower length

from Māgurā downwards is practically a continuation of the Kumār, which discharges into it at that place. The process of silting up has extended as far south as Binodpur, up to which boats of all sizes can use the channel throughout the year.

Formerly the Nabagangā discharged into the Madhumatī at Kalnā near Lohāgarā, but the channel from Lohāgarā to Kalnā has silted up, and the current flows down the Bankarnāli and splits up into two streams at Pātnā. The eastern branch, which joins the Athārabanki, is called the Kāliā or Gāngnaī river; the western branch, which is called the Bhuter Khāl, joins the Kālīganga at Suktagrām.

There seems no doubt, judging from its name and the number of large offshoots it threw out to the east, that this river played an important part in the deltaic formation. It possibly carried the main stream of the Ganges after the Bhāgīrathī and other Nadiā rivers began to silt up, and before the new bed of the Ganges eastward to Goalundo had been formed. Much of its decay has been attributed to the construction across its bed of the Eastern Bengal Railway embankment north of Chuādāngā, another result of which has been that the Beng, which used to receive water from the Nabagangā, has lost its supply. Four *khāls* formerly connected the Kumār and Nabagangā, viz., the Bhawānīpur, Muchia Khāl, Chapri and Raijādupur, but they have almost completely silted up.

Bhawānīpur Khāl. The Bhawānīpur Khāl branches off from the Kumār at Bhawānīpur and meets the Nabagangā at Kulgāchhā. This channel having completely silted up, Mr. W. Shirreff, proprietor of the Sinduri Indigo Concern, managed in 1898 to open it out with the help of private subscriptions and a contribution given by the Jessore District Board; but the channel did not remain open more than two years. It is now navigable for about three months during the rains.

Chitrā. The Chitrā is an offshoot of the Mātābhangā: the name means "Spica," a bright star in the constellation Virgo. It flows through Jessore in a south-south-easterly direction past Kālīganj, Ghorākhāli, Narāil and Gobrā, and joins the Atāi at Yāzir Hāt in the south of the district. According to Rennell, it debouched at a point three miles below Dāmurhudā, and bifurcated between Kālīganj and Ghorākhāli, one channel keeping the course now described under the name of Chitrā, the other flowing further north in the course now called the Phatki. The head of the Chitrā is at present completely closed, owing not only to the silting up of the Nabagangā, but also to an artificial disconnection caused by an embankment which an indigo planter

threw across its offtake about 70 years ago. From Khārāgodā to Ghorākhāli the river does not get any flood discharge from the parent stream, and has degenerated into a local drainage channel covered with weeds. Navigation is impracticable above Kālīganj, but it is navigable from Ghorākhāli to Sabpur: between Sabpur and Bāruipārā the channel has silted up. The river below Ghorākhāli down to where it joins the Atāi is tidal and navigable throughout the year by boats and inland steamers.

Ghorākhāli Khāl.

The Ghorākhāli Khāl branches off from the Nabagangā at Naldi and meets the Chitrā at Ghorākhāli village. It is navigable for big boats throughout the year.

Phatki and Beng.

The Phatki river, formerly a northern bifurcation of the Chitrā, derives its water from the Bengā river, a cross stream issuing from the Nabagangā and passing Naldāngā. It crosses the district in an easterly and south-easterly course and is also known as the Jadukhāli. The Beng is supposed to have once been a large river, as the Naldāngā family fixed their residence on its banks; but now it is almost dry except in the rainy season. The name is a corruption of Begabati, *i.e.*, the swift one.

Kabadak.

The Kabadak (the pigeon-eyed) flows through the south-west of the district in a south-easterly direction and leaves it 8 miles south of Trimohinī. It branches off from Tāhirpur on the Bhairab, the main stream of which was diverted into it about 1790; the portion near Tāhirpur is called the Bhairab. Since 1830, the channel has been silting up, and it is full of weeds down to below Trimohinī. Further down, it becomes a large tidal stream, but between Trimohinī and Chāndkhāli in the Khulnā district its excessive windings make navigation tedious. The market towns of Maheshpur and Kotchāndpur owe their existence to it in former days when it formed the chief waterway of the west of the district. It is now navigable only as far as Kotchāndpur.

Ichhāmatī.

The Ichhāmatī (the self-willed) branches off from the Mātābhāngā at Krishnaganj, where that river takes the name of the Chūrnī, and forms the western boundary of this district for a short distance below Nonāganj. At Bhawānīpur it takes an eastern course, and, passing through the middle of the Bangāon subdivision, joins the river Jamunā at Tippi, whence the united waters run to the sea. This river is fast silting up owing to the same causes as have closed the other rivers of the district. The practice of putting bundles of brushwood and of erecting dams of bamboo-work in the bed of the river for the purpose of fishing is also helping to increase the deposit of silt; but it is not a dead river and still has a fair flow at its offtake from the Mātābhāngā. In its lower reaches it is a tidal river, on which country boats of large size can

ply. Its waters are unusually clear for a deltaic stream, but are infested with crocodiles.

Bhairab. The Bhairab is one of the oldest and the largest rivers of this portion of the delta. Though it has long been a partly deserted channel, and only sections of it can now be traced, its name Bhairab (the terrible) bears witness to the estimation in which it was once held, and in its prime it must have been of great hydrographic importance. At one time it flowed across the present districts of Murshidābād, Nadiā, Jessore and Khulnā into the Bay of Bengal, and as it takes off from the Ganges almost opposite to where the Mahānandā flows into it, it has been suggested that it originally formed the southern continuation of the Mahānandā, which was cut in half by the Padmā during the eastward advance of the latter.

The river consists of two sections, the Upper Bhairab in Nadiā and the Lower Bhairab in Jessore. The connection of the former with the Ganges entirely closed up at one time, but was subsequently forced open again by floods in 1874. It then expanded into an important distributary which poured its waters into the Jalangī, 40 miles further south. The result was that the channel of the Jalangī above the point of junction began to close up; and the Bhairab is now the channel by which the Jalangī proper derives its main water-supply from the Ganges. Lower down, the Bhairab flowed for a short distance through the channel now occupied by the Mātābhāngā (Chūrnī) and thence passed into Jessore. The present position is that the upper Bhairab joins the Mātābhāngā at Sukalpur and the Lower Bhairab branches off towards Jessore from Sultānpur, 6 miles lower down.

Once the Lower Bhairab formed the great central stream of Jessore, but it has been deteriorating for more than a century. About 1790, owing to the silting up of its bed, the main stream was diverted into the Kabadak, which takes off from it at Tāhirpur, and four years later the Collector reported the formation of a sandbank at this point. The stream was, he stated, nearly dry in the hot season, and as the obstruction of the channel threatened the prosperity of Jessore lower down the river, he proposed to cut through it in order to keep the channel open. In the beginning of the 19th century an attempt was made to force the waters of the Kabadak down the Bhairab by an embankment near Tāhirpur. For a time this experiment proved successful, but soon afterwards the Kabadak broke across country to its old bed at a point below the embankment. The upper portion of the river continued to receive flood water occasionally till about 1830, when its connection with the

Mātābhāngā was cut off. Its head has now entirely silted up or about 2½ miles, and from Tāhirpur as far down as Jessore, the river is in the dry weather little more than a line of marshes while in the rains it is almost stagnant except after a heavy downpour. From Jessore to Bāsundiā small boats can pass with difficulty owing to weeds, but during the rains big boats come up to Rājārhāt, 4 miles below Jessore. Below Bāsundiā the river is tidal and is navigable by big boats all the year round. Owing to the current having formerly been diverted down the Bhairab as above stated, the stream for a considerable distance above Tāhirpur is also called the Kabadak.

The Majudkhāli branches off from the Atāi (formerly known as the Māluar Khāl) and discharges into the Bhairab at Simultalā. This river is tidal and is navigable throughout the year by big boats. The Gobrā and Afrā Khāls leave the Chitrā at Gobrā and meets the Bhairab at Afrā. The upper length, which is known as the Gobrā Khāl, is navigable throughout the year by small boats, while the Afrā Khāl is deep enough for all kinds of boats in all seasons of the year.

ihar. The Harihar formerly issued from Kabadak just above Jhingergāchhā, whence it flowed southward past Manirāmpur and Keshabpur into the Bhadrā. The head has long been silted up, and the river bed is now cultivated as far as Manirāmpur. The old channel below that village may be traced by a long shallow marsh; but two or three miles below Keshabpur the river is still navigable for small vessels at high tide.

rā. The Bhadrā is another dead river, which formerly emerged from the Kabadak near Trimohinī, and after receiving the Harihar a mile or two below Keshabpur continued a south-easterly course to the Sundarbans. The bed between Trimohinī and Keshabpur is mostly dried up and under cultivation; below Keshabpur it widens out into a tidal stream.

The Betnā is a branch of the Bhairab, from which it issues at Maheshpur. Thence it runs circuitously to Bagdah and thence to Jādabpur: it subsequently passes into the Khulnā district, where it joins the Kabadak. In its upper reaches it has ceased to be a running stream and its bed is dry, but below Jādabpur it contains enough water for country boats to ply.

The following river statistics are derived from Colonel Gastrell's Survey Report of 1868 with some additions and alterations to bring it up to date; in most cases the mileage is ascertained from Mr. Reynold's map of 1857.

The Garāi river flows north and south within the Jessore district from Ganeshpur to Haripur for 28 miles.

The Hanu river runs from north to south, leaving the Garāi at Bhātbāriā, and falling into the same river at Nischintpur; length 15 miles; alluvial banks in its head-waters have rendered it almost unnavigable except in the rains.

The Madhumatī river runs from north to south, extending from Garāi at Haripur to the Sundarbans; 152 miles in length.

The Bārāsiā river runs north and south from the Madhumatī at Khālpārā to the same river at Bhātiāpārā; about 25 miles in length; after November its course from Khālpārā to Thākurpāsā is a dry bed of sand.

The Kumār runs from north-west to south-east, from Dhuliā to Kāsundi, but the portion from Bāgadānga to Kāsundi is known as the Muchikhāli; length 52 miles.

The Bhawānīpur Khāl runs north and south from Bhawānīpur to Rishkhāli on the Nabagangā; 10 miles in length.

The Masrā Khāl runs north and south, leaving the Kumār at Phulbāri, and falling into the Nabagangā at Murārīdah; length 8½ miles; it has completely silted up.

The Kālīgangā flows from north to south, extending from Sambhunagar to the Kumār at Jāsimhāli; 10 miles in length.

The Dekho Khāl unites the Garāi with the Kumār and flows south-east for a length of about 16 miles from Kumārkhāli to Sailkupā.

The Kachnar Khāl, a cross channel connecting the Dekho to the Kālīgangā, flows east to west; its length is about 8 miles.

The Kātākhāli Khāl commences from Churiā on the Kumār, and, after a course of about 4 miles in a semicircle on the north side of that river, again falls into it opposite Phulbāri.

The Chapri Khāl runs from north, to south leaving the Kumār at Rarā and falling into the Nabagangā at Chapri. It is about 10 miles long.

The Raijādupur Khāl runs from north to south, leaving the Kumār at the village from which it takes its name and falling into the Nabagangā at Bakri.

The Dhobāghātā Khāl flows south-east from the Nabagangā at Jhenida and, crossing a large swamp, discharges its waters into the Phatkī river after a course of 15 miles.

The Kumār Khāl flows from west to east, leaving the Kumār river at Kājalī, and falling into the Hanu at Amtal Nohātā; 3 miles in length; except in the rains its bed is almost dry.

The Nabagangā river runs a course generally from north-west to south-east, extending from Sādhutī to the Madhumatī at Lohāgarā; 91 miles in length.

The Pāltiā Khāl runs east and west, extending from the Nabagangā at Pāltiā to the Jadukhāli Khāl; 3 miles in length. It has silted up.

The Ghorākhāli Khāl, an important channel extending from north to south, leaves the Nabagangā at Naldī, and falls into the Chitrā at Ghorākhāli; 4 miles in length.

The Chitrā river flows a general course from north-west to south-east, extending from Khārāgodā to the Athārabānkā river; 104 miles in length.

The Beng and Phatki rivers and Jadukhāli Khāl run from north-west to south-east, extending from Bishkhāli to the Chitrā river at New Bunāghāti; 52 miles in length.

The Afrā and Gobrā Khāls (each 9 miles in length) run east and west, and formerly only served as outlets into the Bhairab and Chitrā rivers for the waters of the large swamps lying between them, but as these low-lying lands silted up, better defined channels began to appear, and the two watercourses became continuous. The Afrā Khāl is now an extension of the Chamrul and is almost unknown by its old name. The Gobrā Khāl threatens before long to close altogether..

The Māluar Khāl (Atai) runs from north to south, leaving the Chitrā at Jhāburhāt, and flowing into the Bhairab at Solpur; 17 miles in length.

The Bāruipārā Khāl runs from west to east, extending from Bāruipārā on the Chitrā to Kāliā on the Kāliā river; length 1½ miles.

The Bānkāna river flows north and south, leaving the Nabagangā river at Lakshmīpāsā and flowing into the Kāliā at Pātnā; 10 miles in length.

The Bhairab river flows generally from north-west to south-east, past the civil station of Jessore, and empties itself into the Madhumatī at Kachuā; 95 miles in length.

The Majudkhāli Khāl runs from north-east to south-west, flowing from the Mālaur Khāl at Rāmnagar, and falling into the Bhairab at Simultalā; 4 miles in length.

The Harihar river flows a course from north-west to south-east, flowing from Keshabpur to the Sundarbans; 32 miles in length.

The Kabadak river leaves the Bhairab at Tāhirpur and, flowing east and then south, leaves it 8 miles below Trimohinī after a course of about 70 miles.

Lakes properly speaking do not exist in Jessore, but the deeper reaches of extinct rivers simulate lakes, from which, however, they are easily distinguished by their sinuous form. These

stretches of water, often of a horse-shoe shape, merely mark the beds of dead or dying rivers, while still more numerous marshes and long narrow depressions represent the shallower portions of the same streams. Between the river banks there are many large *bils*: fifteen have been enumerated with an aggregate area of 98 square miles. Some of these are connected with the rivers by *khāls* and are regularly flushed out at flood time; others are connected by *khāls* which are partly silted up, so that a flush is only obtained at the time of unusually heavy floods; others again are unconnected with rivers, and rain water and drainage from the surrounding country lie stagnant in them for the greater part of the year. The two latter varieties are found chiefly in the west and south of the district, where there is a general lack of drainage due to the gradual heightening of the river beds usual in deltaic tracts. In the north-east the *bils* are mostly covered with water at the end of the rains, but owing to better drainage they dry up rapidly and more completely, leaving fewer marshes and stagnant collections of water than are found elsewhere.

The district is composed of recent alluvial deposits, consisting of sandy clay and sand along the course of the rivers, and fine silt consolidating into clay in the flatter parts of the river plain, where beds of impure peat also occur. Sand is found in large quantities along the banks and *chars* of the Madhumati. GEOLOGY.

The stretches of low-lying land under rice cultivation afford a foothold for numerous marsh species, while the numerous ponds and ditches are filled with submerged and floating water plants. The edges of sluggish creeks are lined with large sedges and bulrushes, while the banks of rivers have a hedge-like scrub jungle, and bear a few trees like *Pongamia glabra*, *Barringtonia acutangula* and *Thespesia populnea*. The sides of embankments and village sites, where not occupied by habitations, are densely covered with village shrubberies of semi-spontaneous species like *Odina*, *Zizyphus*, *Acacia*, *Glycosmis*, *Trema*, often interspersed with clumps of planted bamboos and groves of *Areca*, *Moringa*, *Mangifera*, and *Anona*. Waysides and waste places are filled with grasses and weeds, usually of little intrinsic interest but often striking because of their distribution. A large proportion of the species of this class to be met with in the district have been inadvertently introduced by human agency. Besides weeds that are indigenous in other parts of India, they include European or African species like *Senebrera pinnatifida* and *Xanthium spesiasum*, and American species like *Ageratum conyzoides*, *Scoparia dulcis*, *Wissadula rostrata*, *Evolvulus nummulasifolius*, *Peperomia pellucida*, *Malachra capitata*, *Herpestris chamaedryoides* *Croton sparsi-* BOTANY.

florus and many others, which not only hold their own with but spread more plentifully than similar weeds of truly Indian origin. The *babul* (*Acacia arabica*) also grows in abundance, and the banyan (*Ficus indica*), *pīpal* (*Ficus religiosa*), tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), and mulberry reach a large size. The north and west of the district are dotted with numerous groves of date-palms (*Phœnix acaulis*), and many of the principal roads are lined with fine avenues of banyan, casuarina and mulberry trees. Date-palms are especially numerous in the western half of the Jessore Bangāon and Jhenida subdivisions, which has been described as 'the date garden of Bengal.' South and west of Jhenida the country is almost bristling with date trees planted in square plots of 10 or 15 *bighās*, and these increase in number the nearer one goes to the Kabadak.

AUNA. Fifty years ago wild buffaloes were hunted in the Jhenida subdivision by Europeans on horse-back, but have now entirely disappeared. Tigers are also extinct, and though old reports speak of wolves in the district, none are now to be found. Leopards however are found all over the district, and are especially numerous in the jungles of the Bangāon and Jhenida subdivisions. Wild pigs are very common in the higher and less accessible parts of the district, and do a great deal of damage to growing crops, especially to sugarcane. With the departure of planters from the district, pig-sticking has come to an end; but they are trapped by Bunas, etc., aboriginals from Chotā Nāgpur brought by indigo planters to work in the indigo factories, who have settled down as ordinary labourers or cultivators. They catch them in snares or nets made of stout twine, and having tied them up, carry them home alive, where the animals are slaughtered and the flesh cooked and eaten. Jackals are very common and with vultures do useful scavenger work. Foxes are also fairly numerous. Porcupines and the wild cat called *khatāsh* are found in smaller numbers. The otter and mongoose are also found wild and tamed; the former are extensively used by fishermen for catching fish in the Narāil and Māgurā subdivisions.

me ds. Among game birds may be mentioned partridge and quail. Wild ducks, geese, snipe and teal, etc., are found in the *bils* and *bāors* which are numerous in the district. In the cold weather the *bils* or marshes teem with wild fowl from the ponderous and sombre-hued grey goose to the light and bright-plumaged blue-winged teal.

h. The rivers, marshes and tanks contain *rui*, *kātlā*, *mrigel*, *baush*, *bhekti*, *boāl*, *ār*, *dhain* (or *siland*,) and *chital* among larger fish,

and *bāchā*, *pābdā*, *tengrā*, *khairā*, *puti*, *maya*, etc., among smaller fish. The *hilsā* is found in the Ichhāmatī, which flows through the Bangāon subdivision, as well as in the Madhumatī or Garāi, Nabaganga and Chitra. The *kai* fish of this district is proverbial for its good quality, though larger varieties are found in other places. This fish, as well as *māgur*, *singi*, *sol*, etc., abounds in the *bils* in the east. The centre of the district, including the district head-quarters, is badly off for fish, owing to the silting up of the rivers that flow through it, and supplies have to be imported by rail from Calcutta, Khulnā and Goalundo.

There is not much fishing in the rivers during the rains, and it practically begins in October with the subsidence of floods. The busy season is from November to March, the largest hauls being made in December, January and February. During this season fish of all kinds and sizes are caught, but the most valuable ones belong to the carp family (Cyprinidæ) such as *rui*, *kātlā*, *mrigel*, etc. Fish are caught not only in the main streams, where there is always a current even in the driest months, but also in the pools or lakes (*bāors*) which form in the beds of rivers after the rains, and in the blind channels (*chhris*) closed at one end but connected with the main stream at the other; in fact, the largest quantity is usually netted in the latter. Among the river fisheries must be included the old or deserted beds of rivers, the deeper portions of which often form pools of considerable extent. The *bils* in the Māgurā and Narāil subdivisions also form valuable fisheries. In the rains they afford spawning ground for many fish, and shelter to all during the dry season; being usually full of hardy aquatic weeds and floating plants of various kinds, they are not open to free netting and are thus immune from exhausting modes of capture. The water, being practically stagnant, is not favourable to carp life, and the larger varieties usually desert them in favour of rivers. But they are the proper home of the *kai* or climbing perch (Anabas scandens), *māgur* (Clarius magur), *singhi* (Saccobranchus fossilis) and numerous other fish which, though dark and unsightly and often of small size, are highly prized by the people as valuable and nourishing food, especially for the convalescent.

With the gradual silting up of the rivers, the *bils* are being reclaimed and brought under cultivation, causing a corresponding reduction of the fishery area. On this subject Mr. K. G. Gupta writes in his *Report on the Fisheries of Bengal* (1907). "The rivers of the Presidency Division, from the Bhāgīrathī or Hooghly on the west to the Garāi (Madhumatī or Baleswar)

on the east, are all offshoots of the Ganges, by which they are fed; they were at one time considerable streams with a good depth of water even in the dry weather, and during the rainy season carried down large volumes of flood water. Owing to the rising of beds of these rivers the current of the Ganges is deserting them and is being deflected further and further to the east. One by one they are all but closed, and this year even the Garāi, which less than 40 years ago gave, by reason of its depth and strong current, no small trouble in the construction of the railway bridge over it at Kushtiā, has had its mouth completely choked up, causing irreparable damage to the fresh-water fisheries of Jessore and Khulnā. The deterioration of the rivers has not only been a direct and potent source of ill-health, but has seriously affected the supply of the only kind of animal food that is open to the people.

"The evil effects are most seen in the districts of the Presidency Division, especially in Jessore and Khulnā. Even down to 20 or 30 years ago the principal rivers of these two districts remained sweet throughout the year until they entered the Sundarbans, but now there is not a river in Khulnā, the water of which does not become brackish in the dry season, and saline water goes well up into the other districts. Carps have in consequence deserted these rivers. The silting up and reclamation of the numerous *jhils* has greatly affected the supply of those live fish for which the two districts have long been famous. Khulnā fortunately gets a fair amount of estuarine fish from its Sundarbans, but Jessore is so badly off that it is content to receive all kinds of small and inferior fish from Khulnā, very often in a half decomposed state, and pays a high price for it. There is a scarcity of good fish in Jessore and Bangāon towns, and the price charged (annas 8 to annas 10 a seer) is equal to or higher than what obtains in Calcutta."

The Gangetic porpoise is common in the rivers in the south and east. The lower reaches of the Bhairab and Ichhāmatī are infested with crocodiles in the rainy season, which carry off a number of persons every year. They also abound in the Madhumatī or Garāi, from which they occasionally come into the Nabagangā.

CLIMATE. The seasons in Jessore are the same as in other districts of Lower Bengal. January and February are cold bracing months with a prevailing north-west wind and a heavy night dew. In March, when the hot weather begins, the wind is variable, but there is still heavy dew with occasional fog in the morning. In April and May the weather becomes distinctly hot. The

prevailing wind blows strong from the south-west, but nor'-westers, with lightning and heavy rain, bring occasional relief. Dry weather prevails, but towards the end of May continuous showers sometimes occur, which are called the *chota barsāt* or little rains, and are looked forward to with great anxiety by the cultivators. The early part of June is hot and trying, but the monsoon rains as a rule set in about the middle of the month. July and August are the months of heaviest rainfall, but are comparatively healthy and pleasant. In September the rains abate, the heat again becomes very trying and the atmosphere steamy, till the middle or end of October when the cold weather sets in.

The following table shows the normal rainfall as recorded at each rain-registering station for the cold, hot and rainy seasons. Rainfall and temperature.

Station.	Years recorded.	November to February.	March to May.	June to October.	Total.
Bangāon	31	2·36	10·07	46·10	58·53
Jessore	41–46	2·82	13·57	50·31	66·70
Jhenida	29—30	2·59	11·82	46·49	60·90
Māgurā	29—30	2·46	13·88	43·83	60·17
Narāil	29—30	2·80	11·81	42·69	57·30
District average ...	...	2·61	12·23	45·88	60·72

From November to January there is almost an entire absence of cloud and rainfall, but there is usually some slight rain in January. The mean temperature falls from 74° in November to 67° in December, but humidity continues high, and occasional low-lying morning fogs, which dissipate with the rising sun, are a feature of the cold season. The total mean rainfall for these three months is only two inches. In February temperature begins to rise, the mean for the month being 70°, and southerly winds become more frequent. The advance of the hot weather is characterized by occasional thunderstorms with rainfall, dry westerly winds with high temperature alternating with southerly sea-winds of moderate temperature. In May south-west monsoon weather is occasionally experienced when cyclonic storms occur near the head of the Bay of Bengal. Such storms give rise to heavy rain, and the average rainfall for the month consequently rises from 3·2 inches in April to 7·9 inches in May. With the commencement of the south-west monsoon, humidity increases to 88 per cent. of saturation and

heavy cloud is continuous. The average rainfall is 12·6 inches in June, 12 inches in July, 10·6 inches in August and 8·3 inches in September. Mean temperature slowly diminishes from 86° in June to 82° in October. During the latter half of September and throughout October cloudy weather alternates with bright sunshine, and the bright periods lengthen and merge ınco the continuous fine weather of the cold season.

Meteorological statistics.

The following table gives the salient meteorological statistics for the town of Jessore, situated 33 feet above sea-level.

	TEMPERATURE.					HUMIDITY.	CLOUD.	RAINFALL.		BAROMETER.
	Mean.	Mean Max.	Mean Min.	Mean Range.		Mean.	Mean.	Inches.	Days.	Mean.
				Daily.	Monthly.					
January	68	78	53	25	27	86	1·0	0·48	1	30·05
February ...	70	83	57	26	34	82	2·2	1·01	2	29·90
March	80	92	68	24	34	80	3·7	1·82	3	0·89
April	86	97	75	22	24	80	4·7	3·90	5	0·80
May	86	95	77	18	21	84	6·2	7·85	10	0·71
June	86	92	79	13	15	88	7·9	13·17	15	0·59
July	84	89	79	10	11	90	8·4	11·62	18	0·57
August	84	89	79	10	11	90	8·4	11·22	17	0·63
September ..	84	89	79	10	12	90	6·9	9·00	12	0·73
October	82	88	75	13	20	86	3·7	5·30	6	0·83
November ...	74	83	64	19	26	85	2·0	1·18	1	0·99
December ...	67	78	55	23	28	85	1·3	0·15	...	30·05
Year	79	88	70	18	22	86	4·7	66·70	90	29·82

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

EARLY HISTORY

In the early ages Jessore appears to have been a fen land, intersected by rivers and full of morasses, which probably contained only a few scattered settlements of fishermen and boatmen. It is known that the Sundarbans jungle extended much further north than at present: Sāgardāri (a village on the Kabadak in the Keshabpur thāna) is said to mean the boundary of the sea. Ptolemy's map of the second century A. D., moreover, shows the southern portion of the delta, formed by the two great branches of the Ganges, the Bhāgīrathī and the Padmā, as cut up by large rivers and waterways to such an extent that it was practically a collection of islands. References to this part of the delta in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Raghuvansa* and some of the Purānas show that it lay between two powerful kingdoms, viz., Suhmā (and probably Tāmralipti) in Western Bengal and Vanga in Eastern Bengal, the boundaries of which were ill-defined and varied according to the power of their kings. The Vangas are described as having fleets of boats and a powerful force of elephants, while the Suhmās lived near the sea-coast on a great river with marshes full of canes, *i.e.*, the Bhāgirathī. In spite, however, of the proximity of the latter to Jessore, the country appears to have been under the control of the Vangas in the time of the *Raghuvansa*, *i.e.*, the fifth century A. D.

When the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang (Hiuen Tsiang) visited Bengal in 639 A. D., he found two large kingdoms in the lower delta, viz., Samatata and Tāmralipti. He described Samatata as a low-lying country bordering on the great sea, rich in crops, flowers and fruits. "The climate", he said, "is soft, the habits of the people are agreeable. The men are small of stature and of black complexion, but hardy of nature and diligent in the acquisition of learning. There are some 30 Buddhist monasteries with 2,000 priests and 100 Hindu temples, while the naked ascetics called Nigranthas are also numerous."* General Cunningham has identified the capital of Samatata with Jessore and writes:—"It is certain that Samatata must be the delta of the Ganges; and as the country is described as 3,000 *li*, or 500 miles, in circuit, it

* S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. II, pp. 199, 200.

must have included the whole of the present delta or triangular tract between the Bhāgīrathī river and the main stream of the Ganges."* Considering, however, the distance assigned to Samatata from Kāmarūpa (Assam), viz., 1,200 or 1,300 *li*, *i.e.*, 200 miles (at the rate of 6 *li* to a mile), it appears more reasonable to identify the capital with Dacca, as Fergusson does, or with the chief town of the Bikrampur *pargana* in Dacca. Nevertheless, as Samatata is described as being 3,000 *li* in circuit, as low and moist, and as situated on the sea-coast, there is nothing improbable in the supposition that the whole or part of North Jessore was included in it. Samatata seems to be another name applied to Vanga because of its flat and level coast; it is also mentioned in an inscription of Samudragupta (*circa* 360 A. D.) as a tributary frontier kingdom of the Gupta empire. Half a century later (*circa* 90 A. D.) another Chinese traveller to India, viz., I-Ching (Itsing), mentioned Samatata and its king Hoh-lo-shi-po-t'a, Sanskritized into Harshabhata. Yasovarman of Kanauj (*circa* 731) is said in the Prākrit poem *Gando-vaho* to have conquered Vanga and to have been powerful in elephants, etc. It is not improbable, therefore, that the fluvial districts of the delta, such as Jessore, continued to be more or less under the sway of the Vanga kings.

In the tenth and eleventh centuries the northern delta appears to have formed part of the empire of the Pāla kings, and it seems practically certain that it was included in the kingdom of the Senas, who were masters of both Vanga and Radhā. As is well known, Nadiā, which is not far to the north-west of Jessore, was a capital of the last Sena king Rai Lakshmaniya, who was driven from it by the Muhammadan invaders under Muhammad Bakhtiyār Khiljī in 1199-1200 A. D. Marching southwards from Bihār, he suddenly appeared before Nadiā with eighteen horsemen and boldly entered the city, the people supposing him to be a horse-dealer. When he reached the gate of the palace, he drew his sword and attacked the unsuspecting household. The king taken by surprise, "fled barefooted by the rear of the palace; and his whole treasure and all his wives, maid servants, attendants, and women fell into the hands of the invader. Numerous elephants were taken, and such booty was obtained by the Muhammadans as is beyond all compute. When his (Muhammad's) army arrived, the whole city was brought under subjection." The conquerors sacked and destroyed the city, and then established the seat of his government at Lakhnautī. "Such," writes Mr. V. A. Smith, "was the dishonoured end of the last Hindu kingdoms of Bengal and Bihār,

* *Ancient Geography of India* (1871), pp. 501—3.

which would have made a better fight for life if they had deserved to exist. The administration of the aged Lakshmaniya must have been hopelessly inefficient to permit a foreign army to march unobserved across Bengal, and to allow of the surprise of the palace by an insignificant army of 18 horsemen."*

It is generally believed that the conquest of Bengal followed the capture and sack of Nadiā, and, if this was the case, Jessore must have acknowledged the dominion of the Muhammadans. This, however, is a doubtful proposition. "The nature of Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyār's conquest appears to have been much exaggerated. The expedition to Nadiā was only an inroad, a dash for securing booty natural to these Turkish tribes. The troopers looted the city with the palace and went away. They did not take possession of that part; and, if they had tried, they would have most likely failed, as their base in Bihār was too far off and too recent to be of much avail. On removing the seat of government to Lakhanawatī, there was an attempt to secure permanent possession of some part of Bengal. On the north Dīw-kot, where he died on his return from the disastrous inroad to Tibet, was evidently in possession of the Musalmāns. On the south Lakhanor was outside their jurisdiction, because Muhammad-i-Sherān had been deputed with a force towards it at that time. Dīw-kot is identified with Damdammā, about 70 miles north-east of Gaur; Lakhanor is identified with Nagor by Stewart and with Lacarcondah by Blochmann; but neither identification is satisfactory, both being far away from the river Bhāgīrathī. Even if either of these identifications be accepted, it would be not more than 90 miles from Gaur. The tract between the two is thus hardly large and forms an insignificant part of the Bengal province. *Tabakāt-i-Nāsirī* itself carefully speaks of Lakhanawatī only; it is only the later writers who dilate on the vaunted conquests of Bengal. In fact, if such plundering inroads be magnified into conquests, and Hindus of Bengal blamed and vilified for allowing the so-called easy conquests, then Mahmūd of Ghaznī has better claims for being credited with the conquest of all Hindustan."†

MUHAMMADAN RULE.

It is not known when Jessore finally became subject to Muhammadan rule, but it must have been before the middle of the 15th century, when the southern part of the district is known to have been held by a Muhammadan Governor named Khān Jahān Alī, or, as he is generally called, Khānja Alī. Local legend relates

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* *Early History of India* (1904), pp. 320-21.

† Monmohan Chakravarti, *Disputed or Doubtful Events in the History of Bengal*, J. A. S. B., April 1908.

the title of Rājā Bikramāditya, while Jānakīballabh was also raised to high office under the name of Basant Rai. Subsequently, when Dāūd Khān rebelled against the Emperor Akbar and an imperial army was marching on Gaur, Dāūd Khān fled from his kingdom after entrusting all his wealth to Bikramāditya and Basant Rai, with orders to remove it to some place of safety. The two cousins took all they could lay their hands on to a house they had built on the banks of the Jamunā in the Sundarbans. So great, it is said, was the treasure they removed, that the splendour of the city of Gaur was transferred to this new settlement, which was therefore given the name of Yasohara (now corrupted to Jessore) meaning "depriver of glory". Another explanation which has been suggested is that the name means that other glorious cities, being eclipsed by this city, had no glory, and that Yasohara is therefore equivalent to "supremely glorious". The site of the city thus founded is at Iswarīpur in the Khulnā district.

Now Bikramāditya had a son, named Pratāpāditya (often abbreviated to Pratāp), at whose birth it was predicted that he would one day supplant his father. Even in his early youth Pratāpāditya was distinguished for his ability and prowess, and the old Rājā began to fear the fulfilment of the prediction and to suspect that the young Prince would not only supplant him, but also kill Basant Rai. Filled with these suspicions, Bikramāditya sent Pratāpāditya to Agra, where he won the favour of the Emperor In a short time he was granted a *sanad* making him a Rājā and conferring on him his father's territory. He then returned to Yasohara and, having ousted his father, removed the seat of government to Dhūmghāt.

For a time, says tradition, Pratāpāditya prospered exceedingly. He adorned his kingdom with noble buildings, made roads, built temples, dug tanks and wells, and, in fact, did everything that a sovereign could do for the welfare of his subjects. The limits of his kingdom quickly extended, for he made war on his neighbours and came off victorious in every battle till all the surrounding country acknowledged his rule. Ultimately, he declared himself independent of the Emperor of Delhi, and so great was his power that he managed to defeat, one after another, the generals sent against him. These successes he owed to the favour of the goddess Jasohareswarī (Kālī), who, pleased with his zealous devotion to herself and his charity to all around him, had promised that she would aid him in every difficulty and never leave him unless he himself drove her away. Her favour was at last withdrawn, for Pratāpāditya, swollen with pride, became very tyrannical

towards his subjects, beheading them for the least offence. The goddess, anxious to revoke her blessing, one day assumed the form of the Rājā's daughter, and appeared before him in court, when he was dispensing his so called justice by ordering a sweeper woman's breast to be cut off for having presumed to sweep the palace court in his presence. Shocked at the impropriety of his daughter (as he supposed her to be) appearing before him in court, the Rājā ordered her out and told her to leave his palace for ever. The goddess then revealed herself and told him that her former blessing and promised aid were now withdrawn, as he himself had driven her from his presence.

The downfall of Pratāpāditya soon followed. One of the last and worst acts of his reign was committed when he assassinated his uncle, Basant Rai, with all his children, except an infant who was hidden in a field of *kachu* or arum plants. The infant, Rāghab Rai (who, when he attained manhood, was given the name of Kachu Rai to commemorate the way in which he escaped), was taken to the imperial court by Bhabānand Mazumdār, ancestor of the Rājās of Krishnagar and *dīwān* of Bikramāditya. There he obtained the ear of the Emperor, who hearing how his father and brothers had been assassinated, directed Mān Singh, the Governor of Bengal (1589-1604), to crush Pratāpāditya. Mān Singh at last succeeded in defeating him with the help of Bhabānand Mazumdār, who led the imperial army by a secret route through the Sundarbans. Mān Singh surprised the capital and captured Pratāpāditya, who was sent a prisoner to Delhi. But at Benāres on his way up-country, he put an end to his life by swallowing some poison he kept concealed in a ring, preferring death to the ignominy of being paraded in an iron cage through the streets of Delhi.

The traditional account of the foundation of Bikramāditya's fortunes is confirmed from other sources. From the Muhammadan historians we learn that there was an officer of high rank under Dāūd Khān, named Srīdhar, (or, to mark his nationality, Srīdhar Bengali). According to their account, Dāūd Khān made away with his nephew Yusuf, who had married the daughter of Lodī Khān, his chief officer (*Amīr-ul-umārā*). The latter thereupon deserted Dāūd Khān and made his submission to Munim Khān, Akbar's Governor of Jaunpur. Finding himself in his turn deserted by Srīdhar, as well as by Jalāl Khān and Kālāpāhār, Lodī Khān took refuge in the fort of Rohtāsgarh in Shāhābād.* Dāūd Khān having

* *Akbarnāma*, Elliot's History of India. VI, 41. In the translation the name is incorrectly given as Saiyid Huri.

succeeded by a stratagem in inducing Lodī Khān to leave the fort, made him a prisoner and put him under the charge of Srīdhar. He then put his unfortunate captive to death at the instigation of Srīdhar and of Katlu Khān, governor of Jagannāth (Purī). After this, Srīdhar was given the title of Bikramājit and got large *jāgīrs* in Jessore.

Not long afterwards Dāūd Khān broke out in revolt against the Emperor Akbar, and, when the imperial army advanced against him, held out in Patna. The Emperor himself came to direct operations, and, Hājīpur (opposite Patna) having been captured, Dāūd Khān lost heart and fled (July 1574). He embarked in a boat at midnight, and Srīdhar, placing his treasure in another boat, followed him.* Dāūd Khān eventually made his way to Orissa, and Srīdhar presumably went to his fiefs in Jessore. Muhammad Kulī Khān invaded Jessore, evidently in pursuit of Srīdhar and his treasure, but not being successful, had to return to Sātgāon, where he joined Todar Mal, who had marched there in pursuit of Dāūd Khān.†

In one respect the traditions regarding Bikramāditya cannot be accepted, viz., in the account given of the origin of the name Jessore, for even before his time we find the name "Jesar commonly called Rasulpur" shown in the *Ain-i-Akbarī* as that of a *mahāl* of *Sarkār* Khalifātābād, with the largest revenue payable by any *mahāl* in that *Sarkār* or in the adjoining *Sarkār* of Mahmūdābād, viz., 1,723,850 *dāms* (Rs. 43,096). Even earlier, moreover, Jessore is found mentioned in connection with the invasion of Muhammad Kulī Khān in 1574 A.D.

As regards Pratāpāditya, no reference to him has yet been traced in any of the contemporaneous Muhammadan historians, unless possibly he is the Pratāp Begera who, according to the *Akbarnāmā*, helped Khān Jahān to defeat Isa Khān, zamīndār of Bhāti, (*i.e.*, the south of the delta in Eastern Bengal) in 1578 A.D. There is however a reference to Pratāpāditya in the records of the Chānchrā Rājās (Rājās of Jessore). They relate that their ancestor Bhabeswar Rai came to Bengal with Azam Khān (1582-83) and, as a reward for his services against rebels (*i.e.*, in the great military revolt of Bengal), received a grant of four *parganas*, viz., Amidpur, Murāgāchhā, Mallikpur and Saiyadpur, which were taken from Pratāpāditpa,‡ apparently in one of the campaigns against him. It seems certain that Pratāpāditya's power must have been recognized as a

* *Tabakat-i-Akbarī*, Elliot, Vol. V, pp. 372-4, 378; *Muntakhabul Tawarikh*, Lowe, II, 1778, 184.

† *Ain-i-Akbarī*. Blochmann, I, 341-2.

‡ J. Westland, *Report on the District of Jessore*, p. 45.

serious menace to Mughal supremacy by 1001 H. (1593 A.D.), when Mān Singh gave *jāgīrs* in Khalifātābād to a number of Afghāns of Orissa under Khwāja Sulaimān, Khwāja Bakir and Usmān Begera. By so doing Mān Singh apparently hoped to achieve two objects, viz., to relieve the unhappy province of Orissa of these turbulent soldiers and at the same time to keep Pratāpāditya in check. The expedient was not successful, for the Afghān *jāgīrdārs* joined with Isa Khān and other zamīndārs of East Bengal and gave much trouble to Mān Singh. In fact, they were not finally subdued till Usmān was decisively defeated in 1612 by a Mughal force under Shujaat Khān at a place called Nek Ugyal, which was probably in *Sarkar* Mahmūdābād.

Pratāpāditya is said to have been one of the Bārah Bhuiyās (or Bhuyās), *i.e.*, twelve chiefs who held the south and east of Bengal towards the close of the 16th century, about whose historical reality there is no doubt. Hindu patriotism, indeed, claims that Pratāpāditya overcame all the other Bhuiyās and had undisputed pre-eminence, but precedence should probably be given to Isa Khān Masnad-i-Alī of Khizrpur. The latter is described by Abul Fazl as the Marzban-i-Bhāti, or governor of the low-lying land near the sea, and as the ruler over twelve great zamīndārs; while Ralph Fitch, who visited Sunargaon in 1586, says that "the chief king of all these countries is called Isacan, and he is the chief of all the other kings". Apart from this question, there seems little doubt that Pratāpāditya was, in fact, one of the Bārah Bhuiyās, who, from occasional references in the works of Muhammadan historians supplemented by tradition, appear to have been nominally vassals of the Emperor but practically independent.

BĀRAH BHUIYĀS.

The researches of Dr. Wise have thrown further light on these rulers and have shown that their power was attested by early European travellers and missionaries. Jarric, who derived his information from the Jesuit Fathers sent to Bengal in 1559, says that the 'prefects' of the twelve kingdoms governed by the king of the Pathāns united their forces and drove out the Mughals. They obeyed no one, paid no tribute, and though they displayed a royal splendour, did not call themselves kings but *Boiones*, which is obviously a Latin translation of Bhuiyās. He then goes on to say that three of these chiefs observed the religion of the country, viz., "*Chandecanius, Siripuranus, et Bakalanus*," and the remaining nine were Muhammadans. The three Hindu chiefs are clearly the Bhuiyās of Chandecan, Srīpur and Baklā; Chandecan has been identified with the capital of Pratāpāditya. D'Avity, whose work was

published at Paris in 1643, copies this description of Bengal, but gives a few additional particulars of the twelve sovereigns, as he calls them. The most powerful, he informs us, were those of Srīpur and Chandecan, but the greatest of all was Masondolin or Maasudalian, *i.e.*, Masnad-i-Alī, the title of Isa Khān of Khizrpur. Again, Sebastien Manrique, a Spanish monk of the order of the Saint Augustin, who resided in India from 1628 to 1641, states in his *Itinerary* that the kingdoms of Bengal were divided into 12 provinces, among which he mentions Chandecan, and that the king of Bengāl, who resided at Gaur, maintained as vassals 12 chiefs in as many districts, whom the natives called the *Boiones de Bengala*.

"These authorities," says Dr. Wise, "advance our knowledge considerably. The Bhuiyās, according to them, had been dependents of the king of Gaur, but had acquired independence for force of arms. They refused to pay tribute or to acknowledge allegiance to any one. From being prefects appointed by the king they had become kings, with armies and fleets at their command, ever ready to wage war against each other or to oppose the invasions of Portuguese pirates or Magh freebooters."* The attainment of such independence can be understood when it is remembered that till the close of the 16th century Akbar's rule had not been firmly established in Bengal owing to a dangerous military revolt and the persistent rebellions of the Afghāns. While the Emperor's armies were dealing with the latter, the Bhuiyās of Bengal were able to maintain practical independence amidst the swamps and rivers of the delta, which were a strong natural obstacle to invasion.

Jesuit accounts.

The identification of Chandecan with the capital of Pratāpaditya is due to the researches of Mr. H. Beveridge, from whose article† the following extracts are quoted. "By far the most interesting account of the Sundarbans is contained in the letters of the Jesuit priests who visited Baklā‡ and Jessore in 1599 and 1600. Their letters were published by Nicholas Pimenta and have been translated into Latin and French. It appears that Pimenta, who was a Jesuit visitor and stationed at Goa, sent two priests, Fernandez and Josa, to Bengal in 1598. They left Cochin on 3rd May 1598, and arrived in 18 days at the Little Port (Porto Pequino). From thence they went up the river to

* *The Barah Bhuiyas of Bengal*, J. A. S. B., Vol. XLIII, Part I, 1874, and Vol. XLIV, Part. I, 1875.

† *Were the Sundarbans inhabited in ancient times?* J. A. S. B., Vol. XLV, Part I, 1876.

‡ Baklā was a *Sarkār* comprising portions of the present Backergunge and Dacca districts.

Gullo or Goli,* where they arrived eight days after leaving the "Little Port". While at Gullo, they were invited by the Rājā of a place called Chandecan (in Italian Ciandecan) to pay him a visit, and accordingly Fernandez sent Josa there, and he was favourably received by the king. One year after these two priests had left Cochin, Pimenta sent two other priests, viz., Melchin de Fonseca and Andrew Bowes, to Bengal, and they arrived at Chittagong or at Dianga† some time in 1599. On 22nd December 1599, Fernandez wrote from Srīpur, giving an account to Pimenta of the success of the mission, and on 20th January 1600, Fonseca wrote from Chandecan giving an account of a journey which he had made from Dianga to Chandecan by way of Baklā. Fonseca's letter is most interesting. He describes how he came to Bacola, and how well the king received him, and how he gave him letters patent, authorising him to establish churches, etc., throughout his dominions. He says that the king of Baklā was not above eight years of age, but that he had a discretion surpassing his years. The king 'after compliments' asked me where I was bound for, and I replied that I was going to the king of Chandecan, "who is to be the father-in-law of your Highness." These last words seem to be very important, for the king of Ciandecan was, as I shall afterwards show, no other than the famous Pratāpāditya of Jessore, and therefore this boy-king of Baklā must have been Rām Chandra Rai, who, we know, married Pratāpāditya's daughter.

"Fonseca arrived at Ciandecan on the 20th November, and there he found Fernandez's companion Dominic de Josa, who must either have been left there by Fernandez in 1598, or had returned some time afterwards. The king received Fonseca with great kindness, so much so, that he says he does not think a Christian prince could have behaved better. A church was built at Ciandecan, and this was the first ever erected in Bengal, and was as such dedicated to Jesus Christ. The fair prospects of the mission as described by Fernandez and Fonseca were soon overclouded. Fernandez died in November 1602 in prison at Chittagong, after he had been shamefully ill-used and deprived of the sight of an eye; the King of Ciandecan proved a traitor, and killed Carvalho, the Portuguese Commander, and drove out the Jesuit priests.

"Leaving these matters, however, for the present, let us first answer the question, where was Ciandecan? I reply that it is

* Gullo is identified by Mr. Beveridge with Bandel. It is a corruption of Hooghly

† Dianga has been identified by Professor Blochmann with Dakhindānga on the Sangu river south of Chittagong.

identical with Pratāpāditya's capital of Dhūmghāt, and that it was situated near the modern Kālīganj. My reasons for this view are first that Chandecan or Ciandecan is evidently the same as Chānd Khān, and we know from the history of Rājā Pratāpāditya by Rām Rām Basu (modernized by Harish Tarkālankār) that this was the old name of the property in the Sundarbans, which Pratāpāditya's father Bikramāditya got from King Dāūd, Chānd Khān, we are told, had died without heirs, and so Bikramāditya got the property. And there is nothing in this contradictory to the fact that Jessore formerly belonged to Khānja Alī (Khān Jahān); for Khānja Alī died in 1459, or about 120 years before Bikramāditya came to Jessore, so that the latter must have succeeded to some descendant of Khānja Alī, and he may very well have borne the name of Chānd Khān. When the Jesuit priests visited Ciandecan, Pratāpāditya cannot have been very long on the throne, and therefore the old name of the locality (Chānd Khān) may still have clung to it. But besides this, Du Jarric tells us that after Fernandez had been killed at Chittagong in 1602, the Jesuit priests went to Sondīp, but they soon left it and went with Carvalho, the Portuguese Commander, to Ciandecan. The King of Ciandecan promised to befriend them, but in fact he was determined to kill Carvalho, and thereby make friends with the King of Arakan, who was then very powerful, and had already taken possession of the kingdom of Baklā. The King therefore sent for Carvalho to 'Jasor', and there had him murdered. The news reached Ciandecan, says Du Jarric, at midnight, and this perhaps may give some idea of the distance of the two places."

THE MUGHAL FAUJDĀRS.

Under Mughal rule Jessore was sufficiently important to have a separate *Faujdār* or military Governor. In the time of Shāh Jahān the *Faujdār* was Mirza Shafshikan, great-great-grandson of Shāh Ismāil, King of Persia, who died here in 1073 H. (1663 A. D.). His head-quarters appears to have been at Mirzanagar on the Kabadak river, where there are considerable ruins with an Imāmbāra and several tombs. His family still survives, though in reduced circumstances, at this place, which was probably so called after Mirza Shafshikan, the Hindu name being Trimohinī.*

When the revolt of Subha Singh and Rahim Khān broke out (1696 A.D.), Nurullah Khān was *Faujdār* of Jessore, Hooghly, Burdwān and Midnapore. This *Faujdār* had no aptitude for war, having spent his time in trade and amassing wealth, and, it is

* Blochmann's *Ain-i-Akbāri*, Vol. I., p. 314; *Riyāzu-s-salātin* (translation 1904), p. 197.

said, possessed nothing of the military character but the name. Being commanded by the Nawāb to take the field against the rebels, he gathered together, after much delay, a few of the 3,000 horse of which he was commandant, and marched from Jessore. On the approach of the Afghāns, however, he was seized with panic, shut himself up in the fort of Hooghly, and begged for assistance from the Dutch Governor of Chinsura. The rebels, convinced by this pusillanimous conduct that they had little to fear from the "merchant soldier," advanced boldly, and laid siege to Hooghly. So persistent and vigorous were their attacks, that the *Faujdār* became alarmed for his personal safety, and during the night crossed the river in a boat and made his escape to Jessore. The garrison, finding their commandant had fled, opened the gates, and the rebels got possession of the city without loss.*

After this exhibition of incompetence, Nurullah Khān was recalled by the Emperor, who appointed Zabardast Khān in his place. Zabardast Khān was a leader of far different mettle. He soon defeated the rebellious Afghāns and drove them headlong out of the country east of Bhāgirathī. "Wherever trace could be found of their whereabouts, they were captured and slaughtered, and in a short time the districts of Burdwān, Hooghly and Jessore were purged of the defilement caused by the Afghān raiders. The tracts that had been desolated by the ravages of these rebels once again became fertile."†

REVOLT OF SITARAM RAY.

Less than twenty years later, during the Viceroyalty of Murshid Kulī Khān *alias* Jafar Khān, the government of Jessore was usurped by Sītārām Rai, whose head-quarters were at Mahmūdpur (now incorrectly known as Muhammadpur).

This Sītārām was a descendant or successor of one Mukund, who was a powerful Hindu zamīndār of Fathābād and Bhushnā in the third quarter of the 16th century. When Akbar's army under Munim Khān Khānān invaded Bengal and Orissa in 1574, Murād Khān, one of the officers, was despatched to South-Eastern Bengal. He conquered, says the *Akbarnāma*, *Sarkārs* Baklā and Fathābād, and settled there; but after some time, he came into collision with Mukund, who, in order to get rid of him, invited him to a feast and murdered him together with his sons.‡ His son Satrujīt gave Jahāngīr's Governors of Bengal much trouble, and refused to send in the customary *peshkash* or do homage at the Court of Dacca. He was in secret league with the Rājās of Cooch Behar and Koch Hājo, and

* C. Stewart, *History of Bengal* (1847), p. 207.

† *Riyāzu-s-Salātin* (translation 1904), pp. 232, 243.

‡ *Ain-i-Akbarī* (translation), p. 374

was at last, in the reign of Shāh Jahān, captured and executed at Dacca (about 1636 A.D.). Satrujīt's name survives in the village of Satrujītpur in the north-east of Jessore not far from Mahmūdpur.* Sītārām was equally refractory, and his revolt caused no little trouble to the Nawāb of Bengal. The following account of it is quoted from the *Riyāzu-s-Salātin.*

"Sītārām, zamīndār of *pargana* Mahmūdābād, being sheltered by forests and rivers, had placed the hat of revolt on the head of vanity. Not submitting to the Viceroy, he declined to meet the imperial officers and closed against the latter all the avenues of access to his tract. He pillaged and raided the lands adjoining to his zamīndāri, and also quarrelled with the imperial garrisons and *Faujdārs*. Mīr Abū Turāb, *Faujdār* of the *Chaklā* of Bhushnā, who was the scion of a leading Saiyad clan and was closely related to Prince Azīm-us-Shān and the Timūride Emperors, and who amongst his contemporaries and peers was renowned for his learning and ability, looked down upon Nawāb Jāfar Khān. Mīr Abū Turāb tried to capture Sītārām, but was not successful. At length, he detailed his general, Pīr Khān, with 200 cavalry to chastise Sītārām. On being apprised of this, Sītārām concentrating his forces lay in ambush to attack the aforesaid general. One day Mīr Abū Turāb with a number of friends and followers went out hunting, and in the heat of the chase alighted on Sītārām's frontiers. Pīr Khān was not in Abū Turāb's company. The zamīndār (Sītārām) on hearing of this, fancying Mīr Abū Turāb to be Pīr Khān, suddenly issued out from the forest with his forces and attacked Mīr Abū Turāb from the rear. Although the latter with a loud voice announced his name, Sītārām, not heeding it, inflicted wounds on Abū Turāb with bamboo clubs and felled him from his horse.

"When this news reached Nawāb Jāfar Khān, his body trembled from fear of the Emperor's resentment. Appointing Hasan Alī Khān, who had married Jāfar Khān's wife's sister and was descended from a noble family, to be *Faujdār* of Bhushnā, and supporting him with an efficient force, Nawāb Jāfar Khān directed him to capture that troublesome villain (Sītārām). The Nawāb issued mandates to the zamīndārs of the environs insisting on their not suffering Sītārām to escape across their frontiers, and also threatening that, should the latter effect his escape across the frontiers of any one, he would not only be ousted from his zamīndāri but be punished. The zamīndārs from all sides hemmed him in, when Hasan Alī Khān arrived and

* H. Blochmann, *Geography and History of Bengal*, J. A. S. B., Vol. XLII Part I (1873), pp. 228-29.

captured Sītārām together with his women, children, confederates and adherents, and sent them with chains round their necks and hands to Nawāb Jāfar Khān. The Nawāb, enclosing Sītārām's face in cow-hide, had him drawn to the gallows in the eastern suburbs of Murshidābād on the highway leading to Jahāngīrnagar and Mahmūdābād, and imprisoned for life Sītārām's women and children and companions. Bestowing his zamīndāri on Rāmjīban, the Nawāb confiscated to the State Sītārām's treasures and effects, and extirpating his family, root and branch, he sent an account of the affair to the Emperor."*

Sītārām was captured and executed in 1712. His children and six women of his family took refuge in Calcutta, where their presence was unsuspected by the English until a peremptory demand for their surrender came from the Governor of Hooghly. This message caused much alarm to the English, who had a search made and at last discovered that Sītārām's family had been concealed by their own *patwāri*, who "by concealing and harbouring them endangered vast prejudice to our affairs in Bengal, for the Dīwān Jāfar Khān seeks all occasions possible to embroil all European traders." The fugitives were then promptly made over to a guard sent by the Governor of Hooghly (March 1713).†

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION.

After the fall of Sītārām Rai, the district was almost entirely divided among three great zamīndāris. The Rājā of Jessore, known as the Chānchrā Rājā, held all the south; the Rājā of Naldāngā held the zamīndāri of Mahmūdshāhi to the north; and the Rājā of Nator held the third zamīndāri of Bhushnā, which included *pargana* Naldi in the north and also the present district of Farīdpur: the first Rājā of Nator to acquire the latter tract was apparently Rāmjīban Rai, who, as already stated, was given a grant of Sītārām Rai's zamīndāri. These three Rājās collected the revenue of the tracts within their jurisdiction and made them over to the Mughal authorities. They were a turbulent and independent class, ready at any suitable opportunity to withhold payment of the revenue, and were only kept in check by the *Faujdār*, who had a small force under him. So long, however, as they were regular in their payments, they were not interfered with, and within their own estates were all-powerful. An officer called the *dārogā* appears to have been almost the only Government official in the district who had anything to do with civil administration. It was his duty to receive from the zamīndārs the dacoits, robbers and murderers whom they apprehended, and to try them. He might also receive complaints, but his

* *Riyāzu-s-Salātin* (translation 1904), pp. 265-67.

† C. R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. II, pp. 166-68

judicial authority was limited, for, except in petty cases, he had to submit his proceedings to the Naib Nawāb for orders. Neither in theory nor in practice had he any authority to supervise the proceedings of the zamīndārs, with whom lay practically the whole administration of the country. They paid a certain sum by way of excise revenue, and managed excise within the limits of their estates exactly as they pleased. They also handed over to Government a certain sum as duties on internal trade, and were allowed in turn to make almost any exactions they pleased from traders. The duties of police were in their hands, and they or their subordinates had also a good deal to do with the adjudicature of petty disputes, whether criminal or civil.

The general result of this system has been graphically described by Sir James Westland. "Almost all the functions of administration were heaped upon the zamīndārs, and they might do as they pleased so long as they discharged their revenue. Supervision was a mere name, and the consequences may be easily imagined. The zamīndārs followed the example of Government and transferred the task of administration to subordinates selected by themselves, not with reference to their ability or uprightness, but solely with reference to their readiness to secure their masters' interests. The people were oppressed that the zamīndār might have his rent, and they were plundered in order that the zamīndār's servants might become rich. The zamīndārs, who performed all their police duties on contract, kept up the most wretchedly inefficient establishments for the purpose, and dacoits and robbers plied their profession with vigour, finding little hindrance from the police, and often in league with them, and even with the zamīndār himself or his higher officers. Complaint against wrong was useless; the zamīndār or his officer had it entirely in his own option whether he would listen to it or not; and the complainant had very little chance of relief, for the oppressor was often the zamīndār's servant, and the plunderer, even if they took the trouble to trace him, would not find it difficult to make friends with his captors."*

EARLY BRITISH ADMINISTRATION.†

The *dīwāni*, *i.e.*, the revenue or fiscal administration of Bengal, was transferred to the East India Company in 1765; but for some years the administration was carried on through native agency, and the British did not assume direct government until 1781, when a court was opened at Murli near the town of Jessore. The

* J. Westland, *Report on the District of Jessore*, 1874.

† This account of early British administration has been compiled from Sir James Westland's *Report on the District of Jessore*.

jurisdiction of the *Adālat*, as this court was called, extended over the present districts of Khulnā, Jessore and Farīdpur, and the first Judge and Magistrate was Mr. Tilman Henckell, whose administration had a lasting effect upon the district. "His acquaintance," writes Sir James Westland, "with every subject affecting his district was most intimate; and no wrong was too remote for his energy to grapple with, no advantage too distant for him to strive after. The idea of his administration was that it was the duty of Government to procure the peace and comfort of the mass of the inhabitants, though it might involve some harm in respect of the Company's commercial interests. These views were a little too advanced for his age, for there was then too great an inclination on the part of Government officials to look upon the natives as born only to be a means of profit to the Company. Mr. Henckell was never unmindful of his employers' mercantile interests, but he always set this before him as his duty—to guard the then almost helpless natives from the oppressions to which they were subjected by the commercial officers of the Company as well as by their own zamīndārs."

Mr. Henckell was succeeded in 1789 by Mr. Rocke, who carried out the Permanent Settlement in this district. He apparently began his service in Jessore in 1781 as Registrar under Mr. Henckell, and when he succeeded him in his office, he continued his policy. "In fact," writes Sir James Westland, "the fruits of Mr. Henckell's administration are for a long time visible in the history of the district; and it is certain that its early records derive great interest from the fact that it was two such men as Henckell and Rocke, who were at the head of affairs during the time which intervened between its first establishment in 1781 and the completion of Lord Cornwallis' reforms, which by 1793 had changed the first crude attempts at district government for a system substantially the same as that which ever since has prevailed."

Police administration.

The first duty to which Mr. Henckell set himself was the reform of the police. In the early days of British rule the *Faujdārs* had been reduced to the position of superior officers of police, with thānādārs in charge of smaller areas under them. There were altogether four thānas in the district as then constituted, viz., Bhushnā, Mirzānagar, Dharmapur and Noābād (now Khulnā). Subordinate to these thānas were several outposts or *chaukīs*. The thāna officers were paid, but the *chaukīs* were worked by means of *goindas* or informers, who received no salary and obtained their livelihood by seizing innocent persons and extorting money from them. This system did

not work well. The *Faujdārs* oppressed the people, their subordinates were in collusion with criminals, and when Mr. Henckell joined the district, there were bands of robbers 50 strong roaming about it. On his appointment, the *Faujdārs* were abolished and their functions transferred to Mr. Henckell, who proposed to station at each of the four thānas a *girdawār* or head police officer, whose business it would be to apprehend dacoits and forward them for trial to Murli. Their subordinates were not to be informers, but imported sepoys, as local *barkandāzes* were apt to collude with offenders. His police were to possess more of a military than of a detective character, for the object in view was not the prosecution of minor offences, but the checking of great ones, such as dacoity and murder. When a dacoity occurred, the investigation consisted chiefly in following up the dacoits to their homes; and as the police relied rather upon their strength than upon the secrecy of their proceedings, this was simply a *quasi*-military expedition. When the pursuing detachment reached the lair of the gang, the zamīndār through his servants was expected, and usually compelled by pressure to deliver up the men.

This system of police, which cost perhaps Rs. 800 or Rs. 850 a month, proved too expensive for the commercial ideas of the Government, which in 1782 ordered the entire abolition of the police establishment, except the force at Murli. The duties of the police were transferred to the zamīndārs, who were directed to take effectual measures that no robberies, burglaries or murders were committed within their estates. They were to do their utmost to bring all offenders to justice; they were to establish thānas wherever the Magistrate should direct, to appoint officers for them, and to be answerable for their good conduct. Persons suffering from robbery were to be reimbursed for their losses by the zamīndār of the lands within which the robbery was committed; and if any zamīndār committed or connived at murder, or robbery, or other breach of the peace, he was liable to a death sentence. This system by which the zamīndārs bore the burden of the police establishment, continued in force from 1782 until 1791 or 1792, when Lord Cornwallis reformed the administration.

The records show clearly how great was the necessity of an efficient police system. In 1781, a noted dacoit or robber chief, after numerous outrages, in which he was screened by the landholders, was at length captured by Mr. Henckell. The latter had to apply for 'the quick despatch' of a guard of fifty sepoys to keep the jail against a large band, which had determined

to rescue the prisoner. In 1783, a body of robbers, about 3,000 in number, attacked an escort conveying treasure from Bhushnâ, murdered some of the escort, and succeeded in carrying off the treasure. None of these robbers were captured. In 1784, Kālī Sankar, the head of the Narāil family, was reported by Mr. Henckell to have been a "dacoit and a notorious disturber of the peace." On one occasion, Mr. Henckell sent a party of sepoys to capture him; but Kālī Sankar, having 1,500 of his followers at Narāil, fought with the sepoys for three hours and defeated them.

As Judge, Mr. Henckell dealt with civil cases; as Magistrate, he was merely the head of the police, and had no independent judicial powers. All that he could do was to receive cases from his police subordinates and send them, if he thought fit, for trial before the *Dārogā*, an officer entirely subordinate to the Nāzim. In 1785 the Government empowered Magistrates to hear petty cases of assault, abuse and pilfering, and to inflict punishments not exceeding four days' imprisonment or 15 stripes. Beyond this, there was no interference with the authority of the *Dārogā* until the establishment of Lord Cornwallis' system. The punishments awarded by the *Dārogās* were death, imprisonment, stripes or the loss of a limb. The accused was often sentenced to perpetual imprisonment; frequently also the period was not specified at all, the prisoner being confined till he made reparation for the injury he had inflicted or found security for good conduct. When the British Government assumed charge of the jails in 1792, it was found that out of 300 prisoners in the Jessore Jail, there were 108 cases in which the imprisonment was of this unlimited nature. **Administration of justice.**

The system of revenue administration will be discussed in Chapter X, and it will suffice to mention that a Collectorate was established at Jessore in 1786. Hitherto the revenue head-quarters of all but the east of the district had been at Calcutta, but Mr. Henckell, pointing out the inconvenience of this arrangement, offered himself to undertake the duties of Collector without additional salary, "actuated," as he said, "by motives of public good, and the enhancement of his own credit and reputation." The Government readily accepted his offer and created a Collectorship for Jessore; it was to comprise Yusupur (Isafpur) and Saiyadpur (which had apparently been under the Collector of Rājshāhi and Bhushnā), the estates lying between the Ichhāmati and the present Backergunge district (then part of Dacca), which had previously been paying revenue at Calcutta and at Hooghly, and also some estates detached from Murshidābād. To enforce the **Revenue administration.**

payment of revenue, the Collector appears principally to have employed pressure. Continual demands were made upon defaulters, and these had some weight, since the Collector had power to use harsher means. He had a defaulters' jail in which recusants might be confined, and he might also attach and realize directly the rents of any estate. This system continued until 1793, when the office of Collector was separated from that of Judge and Magistrate.

Cornwallis' reforms.

Other reforms effected by Lord Cornwallis were as follows. The jurisdiction of the *Dārogā* was abolished, and the Magistrate did all petty criminal work. Courts of Circuit were established, before whom more heinous offenders were tried. The *Nizamat Adālat* took the place of the Nāzim as the chief criminal court, and a number of police stations were established all over the district. In the administration of civil justice there was naturally less change than in the administration of criminal justice. The former remained as before under the charge of the Judge, but Munsifs now appear for the first time in the district.

INDIGO RIOTS.

The subsequent history of the district has been uneventful except for the indigo riots of 1860. The manufacture of indigo by Europeans appears to have been started in Jessore at least as early as 1795, when Mr. Bond, "a free merchant under covenant with the Court of Directors" erected a factory at Rupdia and wanted to put up another at Alīnagar, *i.e.*, Nawapārā. In the beginning of 1796, a Mr. Tuft obtained permission to start indigo works in Mahmūdshāhi; and in 1800 a Mr. Taylor is mentioned as having indigo factories in the direction of the great river. In 1801 Dr. Anderson, the Civil Surgeon, erected works at Birandi and Nilganj (both suburbs of Jessore) and at Daulatpur. After this, applications for new lands continued to come in, and in 1811 Jessore was described as being crowded with indigo factories. The planters, in course of time, acquired considerable landed property and gained for themselves an important position. The district became dotted with large concerns, whose managers and sub-managers could give but slight personal supervision to their work, and had to leave it to native servants. Their underlings fleeced the cultivators; and as the planter often declined to hear complaints from the latter and redress their wrongs, a very bitter feeling was engendered against the factories.

For some years previous to 1860, there had been a succession of rather poor crops; prices were high, expenditure was reduced as much as possible, and everything tended to make the

cultivators discontented. The construction of the Eastern Bengal Railway through Nadiā led to a sudden rise in the price of labour about this time, with which the planters failed to keep pace. Moreover, the ryots were in a state of chronic indebtedness to the factories for advances, which were carried on in the books from father to son, and were a source of hereditary irritation against the planters, whenever a bad season forced them to put pressure upon the cultivators to pay up. A great increase had also taken place in the value of agricultural produce, which led to a keener demand for land ; the cultivation of cereals and oil-seeds now paid the husbandman better than indigo, and so intensified the feeling against it. The discontent of the ryots was fanned by interested agitators, and a false rumour was spread that Government was opposed to the cultivation. At last, the ryots refused to grow indigo.

As a temporary expedient, an Act was passed in March 1860 to enforce the fulfilment of agreements to cultivate indigo and to provide for the appointment of a Commission to enquire into and report on the system and practice of cultivation and the relations between the planters, ryots and landlords. The Commission submitted its report in August 1860, and the conclusion arrived at by the Lieutenant-Governor Sir J. P. Grant, with whom the Government of India agreed, was that the cause of the evils in the system of indigo cultivation in Lower Bengal was to be found in the fact that the manufacturer required the ryot to furnish the plant for a payment not nearly equal to the cost of its production : and that it was to the system, which was of very long standing, more than to the planters themselves, that blame attached. The only remedy recommended by the Committee which it was in the power of Government to apply, was a good and effective administration of the law as it stood. Accordingly, new subdivisions were created; measures were adopted for the introduction of an improved system of police ; and Small Cause Courts under Act XLII of 1860 were established at the most important places in the indigo districts. The minute of the Lieutenant-Governor was not drawn up till the 17th December 1860, and the Government of India did not express their views on it till the 27th February 1861. In the meantime, the relations of the planters and ryots had become more strained.

Accordingly, towards the end of September 1860, the Government of India authorized the issue of a notification to disabuse the minds of the ryots of their erroneous impression that Government was opposed to the cultivation of indigo ; to convey an assurance to them that their position would not be made worse than it was,

and that, in regard to future arrangements, their right to free action in cultivating indigo would be respected; to warn all parties against having recourse to violent or unlawful proceedings, and to announce the intention of Government not to re-enact the temporary Act for the summary enforcement of contracts for the cultivation of indigo.

In October 1860, when this Act ceased to be in operation, the state of affairs was critical. Lord Canning, indeed, wrote:—"I assure you that for about a week it caused me more anxiety than I have had since the days of Delhi, and from that day I felt that a shot fired in anger or fear by one foolish planter might put every factory in Lower Bengal in flames." The intensity of the feeling aroused among the ryots may be gathered from the experience of the Lieutenant-Governor when he passed down the Kumār and Kālīgangā rivers in Nadiā and Jessore and through part of Pābnā. "Numerous crowds of ryots," he wrote, "appeared at various places, whose whole prayer was for an order of Government that they should not cultivate indigo. On my return, a few days afterwards along the same two rivers, from dawn to dusk, as I steamed along these two rivers for some 60 or 70 miles, both banks were literally lined with crowds of villagers, claiming justice in this matter. I do not know that it ever fell to the lot of any Indian officer to steam for 14 hours through a continued double street of suppliants for justice; all were most respectful and orderly, but also were plainly in earnest. It would be folly to suppose that such a display on the part of tens of thousands of people, men, women and children, has no deep meaning. The organization and capacity for combined and simultaneous action in the cause, which this remarkable demonstration over so large an extent of country proved, are subjects worthy of much consideration."

Reports that the ryots would prevent the October sowings led Government to strengthen the military police in the indigo districts, to send two gun-boats to the rivers of Nadiā and Jessore and Native Infantry to the head-quarters stations of those two districts. Subsequently, in the spring of 1861, the planters complained of difficulty in realizing their rents, of being forcibly dispossessed of their *nijābād* lands, and of danger to their own lives and those of their servants. The difficulty as to rents being apparent, extra officials were appointed where required, and Messrs. C. F. Montresor and G. G. Morris of the Civil Service were appointed special Commissioners to settle the rent difficulty, the former for the Nadiā district, the latter for Jessore, Pābnā and Farīdpur. Meanwhile, the planters were assisted by a protective

force and extra courts; and periods of grace were allowed, to one or two of those who were zamīndārs, for the payment of land revenue. There were a few cases of serious outrage and affrays attended with loss of life, *e.g.*, at the village of Shāstpuhā in the Jhenida subdivision six of the villagers were killed and wounded.

Before the sowing season commenced, the new arrangement for establishing new subdivisions in the Division had been completed, and a magisterial officer was appointed to each. Extra Deputy Magistrates were also posted wherever their services were required, and detachments of Native Infantry, of the strength of 200 men each, were placed at the Sadar stations of Nadiā and Jessore. The Magistrates were also authorized to entertain extra bodies of police wherever they might find it necessary to do so, and were directed to keep them in readiness in compact bodies of not less than 25 men for rapid movement as required. These measures proved effectual, and things soon quieted down; but a fatal blow had been dealt to indigo cultivation in the district, from which it never altogether recovered. Cultivation gradually decreased until 1890, when, on account of further disturbances, a board of arbitration was formed consisting of Mr. Alexander Smith, Commissioner, Mr. Charles Tweedie of the Porāhāti concern and Babu Jadunāth Mazumdār, pleader. This board raised the price of indigo plants 50 per cent., which deprived the planters of all margin of profit.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES.

Jessore has undergone a long series of changes with regard to its area, almost from the date of its establishment as a separate district. When first constituted, the magisterial jurisdiction extended over the present districts of Jessore, Farīdpur and Khulnā. The Collectorship, as established in 1786, did not include within its fiscal jurisdiction Mahmūdshāhi, Bhushnā, in which lay the Naldi *pargana*, or Farīdpur. In 1789 Bangāon was the boundary of Nadiā, and Bhushnā and Shāhujiāl were both under the Collector of Rājshāhi. In 1787, these last-mentioned tracts were excluded from the magisterial jurisdiction; and as Mahmūdshāhi was at the same time added to the Collectorate, the two jurisdictions became all but identical extending over the present district of Jessore (except Naldi and Shāhujiāl) and the district of Khulnā. In 1793, Bhushnā was added to the district, which then marched with Murshidābād on the north-west; but shortly afterwards Nawapārā and Kushtiā were transferred from that district to Jessore, while *pargana* Jaodia, just south of these, was transferred from Jessore to Nadiā.

In the beginning of 1794 there was a rectification of boundaries between Jessore, the 24-Parganas, Nadiā, Murshidābād, Rājshāhi and Dacca. The chief result, so far as Jessore was concerned, was the transfer to Nadiā of the tract through which the Bangāon-Jessore road runs, so that Jhingergāchhā now became the boundary of Jessore in that direction. Jessore still retained the lands further south, lying between the Ichhāmati and the Kabadak rivers. On the north, the district ran up to the Ganges, including that part of Mahmūdshāhi which now lies within the Pābnā district, and also including the whole or nearly the whole of the Farīdpur district. In 1811 the tract east of the Madhumatī was transferred to Farīdpur, which was then subordinate to Dacca but was soon afterwards created a separate district, and in 1834 some *parganas* were transferred to Bārāsat in the 24-Parganas. In 1860-61, as a result of the indigo troubles, separate subdivisions were created with headquarters at Khulnā, Jhenida, Māgurā, Narāil and Jessore; and in 1863 there was a further readjustment of boundaries, by which the land to the south between the Kabadak and Ichhāmāti was transferred to the 24-Parganas. At the same time, the Madhumatī, or its eastern channel where it divided into two, was recognized as the boundary to the east, north-east and north, and the Kabadak as the western boundary with the exception of a small tract to the west of it in the Gadkhāli (now the Jhingergāchhā) thāna. In 1882 the subdivisions of Khulnā and Bāgherhāt were separated from Jessore and formed into the district of Khulnā with the Sātkhirā subdivision of the 24-Parganas; while in 1883 the Bangāon subdivision of Nadiā was added to this district.

The headquarters of Jessore were at first at Murli, two miles from the present station. When Mr. Henckell came there, he found one house, "the factory", belonging apparently to the British Government. He repaired and extended this house, and afterwards built a cutcherry for the civil and criminal courts, another for the Collector, a registrar's residence and office, a record room and a small treasury. A short time after Mr. Rocke became Collector, *i.e.*, about 1790, the head-quarters were transferred from Murli to their present locality, then known as Sāhibganj or simply Kasbā, *i.e.*, the town.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

GROWTH OF POPULATION.

THE population of the district as recorded at each census is shown in the margin, from which it will be seen that the only census showing an increase was that of 1881. This apparent increase, however, was probably caused by incomplete enumeration at the preceding census. In 1891 there was a decline of 2·6 per cent., and this was followed by a further decrease of 4 per cent. in 1901, and of 3 per cent. in 1911. This decadence has therefore continued for 20 years, representing a loss of 181,111, and the reasons for it are patent, for Jessore is a land of moribund rivers and obstructed drainage. The banks of the rivers are higher than the country behind them, and depressions are thus formed between the main water-courses. The drainage of these depressions, always difficult, has now become almost impossible owing to the silting up of the mouths of the rivers and drainage channels. Stagnant swamps are formed, while good drinking water is scarce, and the homesteads are enveloped in jungle. The district has long been notoriously unhealthy, and fever is silently and relentlessly at work, destroying many and sapping the vitality of the survivors and reducing their fecundity. In the nine years ending in 1900 the number of deaths returned exceeded the births by no less than 70,934, and at the census held next year the south-eastern corner was the only tract which showed even a nominal improvement. The loss of population was greatest in the country running west and south-west from the Muhammadpur thāna on the eastern boundary, which possesses the evil reputation of having been the matrix both of epidemic cholera and of "Burdwān fever."

1872—1,451,507.
1881—1,939,375.
1891—1,888,827.
1901—1,813,155.
1911—1,758,264.

Census of 1911.

The unhealthiness of the district was no less conspicuous during the decade 1901-1910, in which the total number of deaths exceeded the births by 70,000, while the death-rate was above the birth-rate in all but three years (1901, 1909 and 1910). The census of 1911 disclosed a decline of population in all the subdivisions except Narāil. The decrease was greatest in Jhenida

(6·13 per cent.), where it is due to the prevalence of malarial fever. In the head-quarters subdivision it amounted to 3·82 per cent., while it was slightly greater in Māgurā (4·12 per cent.), and very nearly as great in Bangaon (3·27 per cent.). The only subdivision which shows an advance is Narāil in the south-east where there was a slight increase of 2·54 per cent.

The following table gives the salient statistics of this census:—

THANA.	Area in square miles.	NUMBER OF— Towns.	NUMBER OF— Inhabited mauzas.	Population.	PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION. 1901 to 1911.	Density per square mile.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SADAR SUBDIVISION.						
Jessore	205	1	319	126,984	− 2·09	619
Manirāmpur	218	...	309	135,685	− 4·33	622
Keshabpur	101	...	154	72,407	− 6·00	717
Jhingergāchhā	117	...	160	76,926	+ 0·44	657
Bāgherpārā	107		159	50,303	− 9·40	470
Total ...	748	1	1.101	462,305	− 3·82	618
BANGAON SUBDIVISON.						
Bangaon	226	...	256	104,136	− 3·14	461
Maheshpur	199	1	196	92,125	− 6·37	463
Sarsa	130	...	135	68,683	+ 0·71	528
Gaighāta	94	...	108	42,040	− 2·80	447
Total ...	649	1	695	306,984	− 3·27	473
JHENIDA SUBDIVISION.						
Sailkupa	226	...	275	166,626	− 0·89	737
Kāliganj	142	...	221	71,303	−13·20	502
Jhenida	184	..	263	88,229	− 7·74	480
Kotchāndpur	64	1	76	36,360	− 9·75	568
Total ...	616	1	834	362,518	− 6·13	589
MAGURA SUBDIVISION.						
Māgurā	232	...	307	143,048	− 4·96	644
Muhammadpur	113	...	181	82,627	+ 0·26	731
Sālikhā	80	...	99	40,273	− 9·42	447
Total ...	425	...	587	265,948	− 4·12	626
NARAIL SUBDIVISION.						
Barkālia	101	...	90	90,556	+ 5·91	897
Lohāgara	154		213	120,664	+ 7·15	784
Narail	232	...	238	149,289	− 2·71	643
Total ...	487	...	541	360,509	+ 2·54	740
DISTRICT TOTAL ...	2,925	3	3,758	1,758,264	− 3·03	601

The average density of population is greatest in the east, where the soil is most fertile and still receives occasional deposits of silt, and least in the Bangāon subdivision in the west. The low density in the latter tract is due partly to the silting up of the rivers, which has deprived the country of the silt it used to receive, and partly to long continued unhealthiness. The most densely populated thāna is Barkaliā in the Narāil subdivision with 897 persons to the square mile, and the most sparsely peopled is Gāighātā, which supports only 447 persons per square mile. DENSITY.

The volume of migration is small and Jessore is affected by the intermovement of the people to a very slight extent. Emigration to Khulnā is most pronounced, many of the cultivators leaving their homes to seek their fortunes in the Sundarbans, where land is cheap and the population is sparse. Every year also labourers emigrate temporarily to the neighbouring districts of Khulnā, Farīdpur, and Backergunge in search of labour, especially in the cold weather. Both cultivators and labourers similarly go to the Sundarbans for the paddy harvests, returning after a few months with boats laden with the paddy they receive as wages; Namasudras from Māgurā also go there for the collection of fuel, wood and posts for their houses, Naluās from Māgurā for *nal* reeds, and fishermen from Narāil for fishing. Most of the immigrants come from the neighbouring districts and generally only make short visits in search of employment. The number of immigrants from upcountry is insignificant, and most of them do not settle down for long, but return to their homes after a period of service in this district. Of the other immigrants the most noticeable are the Mārwāris, who have become seminaturalized and have settled permanently in the district. MIGRATION.

There are three towns, viz., Jessore (population 8,911), Kotchāndpur (8,076), and Maheshpur (4,211), but they are all small and altogether they contain only 21,198 inhabitants or 1 per cent. of the total population. The remainder of the inhabitants of the district are collected in 3,758 mauzas, most of which are small, for 37 per cent. of the rural population live in mauzas with less than 500 inhabitants, and 54 per cent. in mauzas containing 500 to 2,000 persons. TOWNS AND VILLAGES.

The language of the district is Bengali, the dialect spoken being that classified by Dr. Grierson as East-Central Bengali because it forms a connecting link between Eastern Bengali, as spoken in Dacca and Backergunge, and the standard dialect of Central Bengal. Eastern Bengali exhibits well-marked peculiarities of pronunciation, *e.g.*, a cockney-like hatred of pre-existing aspirates and, in addition, the regular substitution of an aspirate LANGUAGE.

for a sibilant. While Standard Bengali is unable to pronounce 'sibboleth" except as "shibboleth," Eastern Bengali avoids the sound of *sh* and has "hibboleth." Speakers of the latter dialect also cannot pronounce the letters *ch*, *chh* and *j*, but substitute *ts* for the first, *s* for the second and *z* for the third. In Jessore, however, *s* is not prenounced as *h*, *e.g.*, the people call a snake *ānp* and not *hānp*; *ch* is not pronounced *ts* or *s*, *e.g.*, they say *hākar* (for *chākar*, a servant), not *tsākar*; and *h* is not dropped, *e.g.*, they say *haila*, he became, not *'aila*. The only real mark of an Eastern Bengali pronunciation is in the letter *chh*, which is pronounced as *s*, and *j*, which is pronounced as *z*. Thus we have *āchhe*, he is, pronounced *āse*, and *jan*, a person, is pronounced *zon*. On the other hand, allowing for contractions, the grammar is practically the same as that of Central Bengali. The letter *s* is pronounced as in "this," not like the *sh* in "shell"; and there is a tendency, as in Western Bengali, for the third singular past to end in *o* in the case of intransitive and in *e* in the case of transitive verbs, *e.g.*, *thāklo*, he remained, and *uthlo* he arose, but *kale*, he said, and *dele*, he gave. The habitual past, as usual, is treated as if the verb was intransitive, *e.g.*, *khāto*, they used to eat.*

RELIGIONS. Muhammadans.

Muhammadans, to the number of 1,087,554, account for 62 per cent. of the population: as in other districts of the Presidency Division, there is a somewhat striking disproportion of the sexes, Musalmān males numbering 563,257, while the females number 524,297.

The marginal statement shows the classes most strongly represented among them. The Jolāhas are desirous of being known as Sheiks or Sheikh-Momins, Jolāhā being colloquially used in an opprobrious sense denoting stupidity. Ajlāf is the designation of those lower class Musalmāns, often converts or their descendants, who do not belong to any of the recognized racial groups, such as Mughal and Pāthān, or functional groups, such as Dhuniā.

Sheikh	...	943,445
Jolāhā	...	66,779
Ajlāf	...	19,930
Behārā	...	17,531

Chāklai Musalmāns.

There is a peculiar class of Muhammadans called Chāklai Musalmāns from the fact that they dwell in and round the village of Chākla situated in thāna Manirāmpur on the left bank of the Kabadak. A few miles north of Trimohini this river winds and turns to such an extent that Chākla is surrounded by it on three sides (east, south and west), while on its north lies a *khāl* called Jhānpur Khāl. In this village, as well as in the neighbouring villages of Diāra, Manoharpur, Khurd-Pākuriyā,

* Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V, Part I, pages 201, 202, 279, 285.

Uludāngā, Salimpur, Dulāipur, etc., there are a number of Muhammadan families, who are practically ostracised by other Muhammadans. Their origin is accounted for as follows:—

"Once upon a time, says the tradition, there lived a certain family of Muhammadans in the village of Chākla. Their only offence—a serious offence, indeed, in the opinion of the Indians—was that they had sold fish which they had caught in their village *bandal:* a channel of running water obstructed by constructing a *bāndh* (often of bamboo) for catching fish with traps or nets is called a *bandal.* Whether these Chākla men sold the fish in the bazar, or to fishermen that were passing by their *bandal*, are matters not yet definitely settled. They, on their part, repudiate the assertion, and maintain that they were never guilty of such an offence. Their own version of the tradition is that their neighbours, with whom they were at enmity, contrived to bring them into disgrace. A number of fishermen, who were secretly tutored by their enemies, on being questioned by the villagers whence they had got the fish, replied, "Oh, we bought them from so and so, who were catching fish and sold them to us." Those men who—truly or falsely—were considered guilty of selling fish by the villagers, were at once excommunicated."

Whatever may have been the cause, other Musalmāns will not eat or drink with them, nor smoke the same hookah or pipe. The excommunicated men, who are called Chāklai Musalmāns, whether they live at Chākla or not, live in complete isolation. They marry among themselves, and attend only their own tribal *ziyāfats* or feasts. The community is described as being very compact and shy of interference from outside.*

Chotabhāgia Muchis. The Chotabhāgia Muchis are another small outcaste community. They remove night-soil and have been outcasted for so doing: they worship Kāli and Satya Narāyan, and number about a hundred families in all.

Hindus. The Hindus of the district number 667,936 and account for 38 per cent. of the population. The Namasudras are the most numerous caste, representing over 25 per cent. of the total number of Hindus. Of the higher castes Brāhmans and Kāyasths are well represented, but the only other castes with a strength of over 25,000 are the Muchis, Kaibarttas, and Mālos, who do not rank high in the social scale. The marginal table shows the numerical strength of each of these castes as recorded at the census of 1911.

Namasudras ...	170,009
Kāyasths ..	50,409
Muchis ...	46,916
Kaibarttas ...	44,152
Brāhmans ...	38,098
Mālos ...	26,624

* Abdul Wali, *Origin of the Chāklai Musalmāns*, J. A. S. B., Part III, 1898, pp. 61-62.

Namasūdras.

The Namasūdras, or, as they were formerly called, the Chandāls, are not only the most numerous but also one of the most interesting castes in Jessore owing to their independence and self-reliance and their efforts to rise in the social scale As instances of this may be mentioned the resolutions passed at a general conference of Namasūdras held in 1908. From the published reports it appears that its objects were the spread of education, the establishment of a permanent fund and the removal of social evils. In pursuance of those objects the following resolutions were passed:—" (1) That the Namasūdra conference be made permanent by yearly meetings to be held in different districts for the discussion of social matters and the spread of education. (2) That a village committee be formed in every Namasūdra village, and unions of 15 such villages, and a district committee in every district. (3) That for acquiring funds for a Namasūdra contribution fund, village committees, unions and district committees be authorized to collect subscriptions. A handful of rice should be set apart before meals in every family, and collected weekly by the village committee. Every member of village committee will pay a monthly subscription of one anna, of unions of two two annas, and of district committees four annas. Three per cent. of the expenses incurred in *srāddha*, marriages and other occasions must be reserved for this fund. (4) That as some active measures should be adopted towards social reform, it is resolved that any Namasūdra marrying his son under 20 or daughter under 10 will be excommunicated. The committees and unions must be especially careful about strict compliance with this resolution."

In 1909 the Namasūdras and Muhammadans of the Narail subdivision made common cause to improve their social position by means of a practical protest against the low opinion in which they are held by higher caste Hindus. With this object they combined for some months not to work as menial servants in the houses of the latter, or eat food cooked by them. In some parts of the Māgura subdivision also the Namasūdras refused to serve in the houses of the higher class Hindus or cultivate their lands. More recently there has been considerable bad feeling between the Namasūdras and the Muhammadans, which has culminated in serious riots over a considerable area. While the Namasūdras have become more self-respecting, they have become more self-assertive and the resultant friction between them and other sections of the community has led to a good deal of turbulence. In Jessore and Khulna the Namasūdras now claim to be Sudras

of Brahman descent. Their ancestor, they say, was Kasyapa Muni; they all belong to the Kasyapa *gotra*, and perform *sārddh* ceremonies after ten days, like Brahmans, and also like Chamārs, the saying being "*Chandāl, Brāhman, Muchi, igārah dine suchi*, and they use boiled rice for *pindas*. Education is gradually spreading among them; by occupation they are chiefly agriculturists. The following account of them is extracted from Sir H. H. Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* :—

"The derivation of the name Chandāl is uncertain, and it is a plausible conjecture that it may have been, like Sūdra, the tribal name of one of the aboriginal races whom the Aryans found in possession of the soil. Unlike the Sūdras, however, the Chandāls were debarred from entering even the outer circles of the Aryan system, and from the earliest times they are depicted by Sanskrit writers as an outcaste and helot people, performing menial duties for the Brahmans, and living on the outskirts of cities (*antebāsi*) apart from the dwellings of the dominant race. Iron ornaments, dogs, and monkeys, are their chief wealth, and they clothe themselves in the raiment of the dead. Manu brands them as 'the lowest of mankind,' sprung from the illicit intercourse of a Sūdra man with a Brahman woman, whose touch defiles the pure and who have no ancestral rites. In the Mahābhārata they are introduced as hired assassins, whose humanity, however revolts against putting an innocent boy to death. In the Rāmāyana they are described as ill-formed and terrible in aspect, dressing in blue or yellow garments with a red cloth over the shoulders, a bear's skin arround the loins, and iron ornaments on the wrists. Even the liberal minded Abūl Fazl speaks of the Chandāls of the sixteenth century as "vile wretches who eat carrion." At the present day the term Chandāl is throughout India used only in abuse, and is not acknowledged by any race or caste as its peculiar designation. The Chandāls of Bengal invariably call themselves Namasudra,* and with characteristic jealousy the higher divisions of the caste apply the name Chandāl to the lower, who in their turn pass it on to the Dom.

* The derivation of this name is uncertain. Dr. Wise thinks it may be from "the Sanskrit *Namas*, adoration, which is always used as a vocative when praying, or the Bengali *Nāmate*, below, underneath." The latter suggestion seems the more plausible. The Pandits' interpretation of the former is understood to be that the Chandāl is bound to do obeisance even to a Sudra. It would be promotion for the Chandāls of Manu to get themselves recognised as a lower grade of Sudras. The name may also be referred to Namasa or Lomasa Muni, whom some Chandāls regard as their mythical ancestor. On the other hand Namasa Muni himself may have been evolved from the attempt to explain away the suggestion of inferiority implied in the name Namasudra.

"The legends of the Chandāls give no clue to their early history, and appear to have been invented in recent times with the object of glorifying the caste and establishing its claim to a recognised position in the Hindu system. It may perhaps be inferred from the present geographical position of the Chandāls that they came into contact with the Aryans at a comparatively late period, when the caste system had already been fully developed and alien races were regarded with peculiar detestation. This would account in some measure for the curious violence of the condemnation passed on a tribe in no way conspicuous for qualities calculated to arouse the feeling of physical repulsion with which the early writers appear to regard the Chandāls. It is possible, again, that they may have offered a specially stubborn resistance to the Aryan advance.

"Chandāls are very particular as regards caste prejudices. They never allow a European to stand or walk over their cooking place on board a boat, and if any one inadvertently does so while the food is being prepared, it is at once thrown away. They are also very scrupulous about bathing before meals, and about the cleanliness of their pots and pans. Still more, they take a pride in their boat, and the tidy state in which they keep it contrasts forcibly with the appearance of one manned by Muhammadan boatmen.

"On the whole, Dr. Wise regards the Chandāl as "one of the most lovable of Bengalis. He is a merry, careless fellow, very patient and hard-working, but always ready, when his work is done, to enjoy himself. Chandāls are generally of very dark complexion, nearer black than brown, of short muscular figures and deep, expanded chests. Few are handsome, but their dark sparkling eyes and merry laugh make ample amends for their generally plain features. In the 24-Parganas many members of the caste are said to be of a noticeably fair complexion. When young, the Chandāl is very vain of his personal appearance, oiling, and arranging it in the most winsome fashion known. Many individuals among them are tall and muscular, famed as clubmen and watchmen. During the anarchy that accompanied the downfall of Moghal power, the rivers of Bengal swarmed with river thugs or dakaits, who made travelling unsafe and inland trade impossible. The Chandāls furnished the majority of these miscreants, but since their dispersion the Chandāl has become a peaceful and exemplary subject of the English Government."

Kaibarttas. The Kaibarttas include no less than 36,195 Chāsi Kaibarttas, and the remainder consist of 4,124 Jaliyā

Kaibarttas and 3,833 unspecified Kaibarttas, *i.e.*, persons who returned themselves as simply Kaibarttas. The Chāsi Kaibarttas, whose occupation is agriculture, and who rank higher in the social scale than the Jaliyā Kaibarttas, whose occupation is fishing, are also known as Māhishya, this being a designation recently adopted by them.

A caste of fish-dealers called Karāl, which was not recorded separately in 1901, and which was brought to notice by Mr. B. L. Chaudhri, B.A., B.Sc. (Edin.), is found in Jessore. It is reported that they have the same Brahmans as those Namasudras who cure and sell fish, and that according to tradition they and the Chandāls are brothers. The following account of them is quoted from Mr. Chaudhri's paper on the subject* :— Karāls.

"In December of 1906, when touring in places remote from railway communication, I found that in the eastern parts of the Jessore district the custom of salting, or rather pickling, *ilis* (hilsa) in brine, was very much resorted to owing mainly to the want of adequate local demand for the fish in a fresh condition. In going into the details of different processes of salting I came to learn the following rather curious fact. All along the banks of the river Madhumati, it appears that Mālas and Tiars (the so-called Rājbansi Tiars), who are the actual catchers of *ilis* (hilsa) and immediate holders of the fisheries, do not salt or pickle fish, and are precluded by caste rules from pickling of fish as a profession. It appeared also that there was a quite distinct caste of Antyaja Hindus, who carried on the pickling and the selling of pickled fish. These people are designated Karāls, and in their manners, habits and religious observances are totally different from the fishermen, *i.e.*, the Mālas and Tiars. Karāls have separate Brahmins from Mālas and Tiars and they observe *suddhis* on the 12th day, whereas Mālas and Tiars keep 30 days. Karāls do not drink water touched by Tiars or Mālas, nor would the Mālas and Tiars drink water touched by the Karāls. It was ascertained that though not numerous in any one place, they (the Karāls) are found well scattered in the river districts of the two Provinces of Bengal, viz., Jessore, Khulna, Barisāl and Faridpur."

There is one peculiar class of Goalas in this district known as Daga Goālās, who brand cattle, castrate bullocks, etc. They are, in fact, cow-doctors, who claim to be expert veterinary surgeons and whose stock-in-trade consists of a few iron instruments. Daga Goālās.

* Note on a Caste of Fish-dealers in Bengal—J. A. S. B., Volume VI, No. 11, 1910.

Branding with a red-hot iron, accompanied by incantations, appears to be their favourite method of treatment. Leaving their homes in November, they travel about Bengal during the winter months; their services are in considerable request, and in these few months a man can earn as much as Rs. 500.

Kulīn Brāhmans. There are colonies of Kulīn Brāhmans at Lakshmīpāsā and at Kamalpur, five miles south of Jessore, of whom the following account is quoted from Sir James Westland's *Report on the District of Jessore* (1874). "Lakshmīpāsā is remarkable as the habitation of a number of the pure Kulīn Brāhmans. This place and its immediate vicinity, and Kamalpur, five miles south of Jessore, are the only places in the district where they reside. The peculiar features of Kulīnism are less known than are the abuses of it, and I shall therefore state them very shortly here. The Kulīns are a caste of Brāhmans who are esteemed very sacred, and are held in the highest honor. Their separation into a special caste, endowed with these distinctions, they date from Ballāl Sen, the ancient king of Bengal, the remains of whose palace are still to be seen near Nadiā, and from Lakshman Sen, his son (about 1100A. D.). The preservation of their Kulīnism depends upon their strict abstinence from intermarriage with other stocks and their strict adherence to the limitation as to intermarriage among themselves prescribed by the rules of their caste. One of these rules is that the two persons marrying must be descended from the original stock by exactly the same number of generations. But there are many other rules, and the system of rules (which is called *parjyā*) is, I believe, attributed to Lakshman Sen. So great is the practical restriction which they impose upon marriage, that to each person born there are only, in the whole world, a few persons with whom he may marry.

"The genealogical records are kept by the *ghataks*, and when any marriage takes place, it is entered in their books, and they define the persons with whom the offspring of the marriage may intermarry, and to these they are absolutely confined, if they would keep their caste. Of the persons so defined, some may not be born and some may die, but the restriction remains. A father with a half-a-dozen daughters may find he has only one bridegroom for all his daughters, so they are all married off to him. Perhaps another father has only the same man as a possible bridegroom for his daughters too, so the man gets another batch of wives. Little boys sometimes marry aged women, and little girls are married to aged men. There is no help for it; they must be married, and these are the only bridegrooms the rules allow. Many women find themselves without any possible

bridegrooms, and these are held in immense reverence, and are called daughters of the houses of Theka.

"Fathers compel a rigid adherence to all these rules, for it is their honor that suffers by an infringement; but there are many fathers who are not Kulīns, and who would pay large sums to Kulīn bridegrooms to obtain from them the honor involved in having their daughters married to Kulīns. There are several Kulīns, therefore, who go abroad seeking for such fathers and obtaining from them considerable sums of money to marry their daughters. The father only cares to have his daughter so married, and does not in the least insist upon his Kulīn son-in-law keeping or staying with his new wife, and so the Kulīn leaves this place, and goes on to find another father with a sum of money and a daughter to spare.

"There are some Kulīns at Lakshmīpāsā who have gone on these marrying tours and have returned to set up a trade with the money they have obtained as the price of their marriages to all these wives. When Kulīns do this, their Kulīnism is of course gone for ever, and it is looked upon by Kulīns as a scandalous sort of proceeding thus to prostitute one's Kulīnism for money. It will be seen from the above that both the legitimate exercise of Kulīnism and its abuse operate in restraint of marriage. Women are married to Kulīns and never see them again. Some cannot be married at all. Hardly any wife can possess a husband to herself or even a considerable share in one. The evils that follow from this state of things—the unchastity and child-murder that are prevalent—are acknowledged even by those who live according to the rules of Kulīnism.

"The story of the immigration of Kulīns into this place is as follows. A number of Kulīn families lived at Sarmangal, near Khalia in Backergunge, and the Maghs who resided in that part of the country used to annoy these families excessively by forcibly marrying their daughters to Kulīn boys. One old man, Rāmanand Chakravarti, determined to save himself from this desecration and left the place, intending to find a new residence on the banks of the Ganges. When he passed this place, the Mazumdārs of Dhopādaha, a village 3 miles west of Lakshmīpāsā, induced him to stay there and marry one of their daughters, paying him for the honour by giving him their *jamā* rights in the village. He and his nine sons therefore remained in that village, and though their caste was slightly blemished by this marriage, still, as the Mazumdārs were of high caste, the Chakravarti family did not lose their Kulīnism. From that time to this is five generations,

and all the Kulīns here derive their descent from this Rāmanand."

To this it should be added that Kulīnism is not now so common or so rigorous in its rules, that the practices referred to are disappearing, and that the Kulīns are becoming monogamous.

Kulīn Kayasths. Bagutia in the Narail subdivision and Jangalbāndh in the Sadar subdivision are the two principal centres of the Kulīn Kayasths.

Baidyas. There are two centres of Baidyas in this district viz., Kālīā in the Narāil subdivision and Atharkada in the Māgurā subdivision. The Baidyas are said to have come here from Rārh, *i.e.*, the country on the west of the Bhāgīrathī, at a time when these villages were in the midst of a marshy tract, where they could take refuge against the inroads of the Marāthās. It is possible, however, that they settled in the district at an earlier date, for Ballāl Sen is said to have distributed the Baidyas of his time into 27 *sthāns* or communes, outside which no Baidya could reside without losing caste. Of the eleven principal settlements thus formed, no less than eight were in Jessore or Khulnā, viz., Senhāti, Chandam-Mahāl, Dāspārā, Puigrām, Karoriā, Shendiā, Itnā and Bhattapratāp. The practice of *Sati* was formerly common among the Baidyas of this district, Mr. Ward writing in 1811:—"At Sonakhāli in Jessore, which contains many families of this order, almost all the widows are burnt alive with the corpses of their husbands."*

CHRISTIANS. At the census of 1911 the number of persons returned as Christians was 1,272, of whom 1,220 were natives. These figures show an appreciable growth in the number of Christians since 1900, when the total was 912, of whom 867 were native Christians. The denominations most strongly represented are Baptists with 307 members and Roman Catholics with 902 members. The Baptist Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society and a Roman Catholic Mission are at work in the district. The Mission last named is under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Krishnanagar, and the Vicar General is stationed at Simuliā (P. O. Jhingergāchhā). At the latter place is a church dedicated to our Lady of the Rosary built in 1884, and at Jessore is the Church of the Sacred Heart built about 1860. At Simuliā the mission maintains a dispensary, a home for widows and catechumens, a boys' school, an orphanage and a girls' school.

NEWSPAPERS. At Jessore two monthly journals are published, the *Hindu Patrika* and the *Brahmachari*, of which the former is in Bengali

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* Tribe and Castes of Bengal, Vol. I., p. 48.

and the latter in English: both deal with religious and philosophical topics. A weekly Bengali paper, the *Jessore Patrika*, which deals with matters of local interest, is also published at Jessore; another Bengali weekly, called the *Pallibartta*, is published at Bangaon, and a third, called the *Kalyāni*, at Māgura.

The following are the places at which the principal fairs are held:— **FAIRS.**

(1) Trimohinī in the Sadr subdivision, a name signifying the meeting of three rivers, a spot always held sacred by Hindus. The fair is held in the middle of March, and lasts three days. There is a tank in the village, sacred to Kālī, the water of which is reputed to have miraculous healing properties.

(2) Balrampur in the Sadr subdivision. This fair is also held in March and lasts three days.

(3) Bodhkpāna in the Sadr subdivision: the fair is held during the Dol Jātra.

(4) Maheswarkund in the Jhenida subdivision: the fair takes place in March and celebrates the Basant Pūja.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

GENERAL CONDITIONS. THE district has long been notorious for unhealthiness, and this evil reputation is not undeserved. Its insalubrity is due to its physical configuration and the operation of great natural changes. The country is a flat alluvial plain intersected by several rivers debouching from the Ganges, and by numerous lesser channels and *khāls*, some of which also formerly branched off from the Ganges or from the larger rivers, but have now lost their connections with the feeder streams, and have become merely channels for local drainage. In other words, they have ceased to be flowing streams, and, to use a graphic native expression, have 'died.' The main rivers, such as the Garāi or Madhumatī, the Nabagangā below Māgurā, and the portion of the Chītrā in the Narāil subdivision, though they have degenerated considerably, still have clear, flowing streams, high banks, and a sandy bottom free from weeds. Other rivers, however, such as the Bhairab, and the upper portion of the Nabagangā, have practically no current for the greater part of the year; except in the rains, when they maintain a languid vitality, these so-called rivers are merely a chain of long stagnant pools overgrown with weeds. In the south the lower reaches of the rivers are affected by the tide.

After the rainy season a portion of the country is practically under water, either from the overflowing of neighbouring rivers or from the local rainfall; many of the villages are flooded and some even have to be evacuated. When the land dries up extensive *bils* are left, some of which remain stagnant throughout the year. Some of these *bils* are connected with the rivers by *khāls*, through which they receive river water at the time of high floods; but in many cases the *bils* have lost their connection with the rivers, either owing to the silting up of the *khāls* or alterations in the course of the rivers.

The natural unhealthiness of the district is aggravated by a general disregard of sanitary precautions. The homesteads are enclosed by a mass of trees and undergrowth; the drinking water is taken not from wells but from open tanks, which are

subject to pollution by surface drainage and are also used for washing clothes and bathing.

VILLAGE SANITATION.

The following account of village sanitation is quoted from a Report on the Jessore District by Captain G. E. Stewart, I.M.S., and Lieutenant A. H. Proctor, I.M.S., published as an Appendix to the Report of the Drainage Committee, Presidency Division, 1907. "The majority of villages in the district consist of a number of separate homesteads scattered over a large area, each homestead being occupied by several members of the same family. The houses are built of split bamboos raised on a mud plinth of varying height, and in close proximity to the dwelling-houses are the sheds for cattle, the houses and sheds usually enclosing a central court-yard. The whole village is embedded in a dense angled mass of jungle and bamboo thickets, and through this run narrow paths winding in every direction. Beneath the thick undergrowth round each house lie countless numbers of pits, from which earth for the plinths has been dug; during the rains, and for long afterwards, these are stagnant fœtid pools, full of rotten leaves and vegetable matter. No sun reaches them so evaporation is slow, and they remain for months convenient places in which the female mosquito, heavy with her latest feed of blood in the neighbouring house, can lay her eggs, and swarms of larvæ find ideal surroundings for their growth. The adult mosquito too finds shelter during the day from sun and breeze in the shade of the jungle round the houses, and the more domestic species obtain a resting place undisturbed by the smoke in the cow-sheds alongside. To the inhabitants the jungle affords privacy in their households, and probably some protection from cold breezes in the winter, but it is also a convenient latrine, and the stench in some of the villages is overpowering.

"The drinking water-supply is generally extremely bad. Villages on a river take it directly from the edges, generally at a spot which is used as a bathing *ghāt*, while the banks in close proximity are made use of as a latrine. A few villages have tanks reserved for drinking purposes, but these are in a very small minority, and generally the tanks are used for all domestic purposes. Some villages have kutcha wells, but often these are not used for drinking purposes, either on account of religious scruples or because the water is not considered good, and the tank or river water is preferred. In the greatest number of villages there is no attempt at any provision for drinking water, and it is taken from the nearest *bil* or from casual collections of water in the pits or ponds near the houses, most of which are filthy

and stinking. In those parts of the country where jute is grown there are many ponds in and round each village, which are used for steeping and afford breeding places for mosquitos. The rivers and tanks from which drinking water is obtained are also often used for steeping jute; and though this may not be a direct cause of malaria, it is probably injurious to health.

"This extremely insanitary condition of the villages is combined with general water-logging of the soil, shown by the high level of the sub-soil water, where it could be estimated, and by the innumerable marshy tracts and *bils* scattered all over the country, and it is to the combination of the two that the extreme prevalence of malaria must be attributed."

MEDICAL HISTORY

The earliest epidemic of which there is record in Jessore is the cholera epidemic of 1817, which is said to have caused no less than 10,000 deaths in two months. Of this epidemic and the consternation it caused a graphic account has been left by the then Civil Surgeon, Dr. Tytler. "The disease commenced its ravages in August, and it was at once discovered that the August of this year had five Saturdays. The number five being the express property of the destructive Siva, a mystical combination was at once detected, the infallible baneful influence of which it would have been sacrilege to question. On the night of the 29th a strange commotion spread throughout the villages adjacent to the station. A number of magicians were reported to have quitted Morully (*i.e.* Murli) with a human head in their possession, which they were to be directed by supernatural signs to leave in a certain, and to them unknown, village. The people on all sides were ready, by force, to arrest the progress of these nocturnal visitors; for the prophecy foretold that wherever the head fell, the destroying angel, terminating her sanguinary course, would rest, and the demon of death, thus satisfied, would refrain from further devastation in this part of the country. Dr. Tytler says that on the night while walking along the road, endeavouring to allay the agitation and to quiet the apprehensions of the people, the Judge and he perceived a faint light issuing from a thick clump of bamboos. Attracted to the spot, they found a hut, which was illuminated and contained the images of five Hindu gods, one of which was Sītalā. In front of the idols a female child, about nine years of age, lay upon the ground. She was evidently stupefied with intoxicating drugs, and in this manner prepared to return responses to such questions as those initiated into the mysteries should think proper to propose. By the light of our present knowledge we

may apprehend that the poor little creature lay thus prepared rather as the victim than the oracle."*

It is generally believed that Jessore was the place in which cholera first appeared in virulently epidemic form. "In one respect," writes Sir James Westland, "Jessore has acquired a very evil reputation; for it was the place where began that first great outbreak of cholera which, spreading up the valley of the Ganges, attacked and decimated the army of the Marquis of Hastings, then engaged in operations against Scindia, in Central India, and afterwards extended itself, in a north-westerly direction, over the whole of the civilized world. Cholera had been known before as an endemic disease prevailing more or less in almost every region in the plains of Lower Bengal, but before 1817, the year of the outbreak now referred to, it had not that dreadful form which we now associate with its name." The belief that Jessore was the place where the outbreak first occurred does not appear to be warranted by the facts. Dr. MacPherson, for instance, writes in the *Annals of Cholera* (London, 1872). "The great epidemic of 1817 is usually described as having commenced at Jessore; but in that year there was a fatal case of cholera in Fort William in the month of March, which attracted no attention. In May and June the disease was raging epidemically in Krishnagar and Mymensingh. In July it was at Soverganj in the Dacca district and as high up the river as the large city of Patnā, and it did not reach Jessore till August, and not till after the middle of that month. It broke out at Calcutta on much the same date, or a few days earlier. In both places it caused great consternation, but the greatest in Jessore."

Nineteen years later, in 1836, there was the first outbreak of that fatal type of fever which spread over Jessore and Nadiā and subsequently devastated the Burdwān Division. It broke out in March 1836 near Muhammadpur among a body of 500 to 700 convicts working on the road from Jessore to Dacca; in a short time 150 of the prisoners died, and the native officers in charge of them fled. The epidemic did not quit Muhammadpur for about 7 years, but seemed to disappear in 1843. In 1846, however, it broke out again, and in the next two years spread over the whole district. After a temporary cessation the fever broke out again in 1854-56, and about this time began to spread westward to Nadiā and the 24-Parganas, where it finally culminated in the severe epidemic which devastated those districts from 1857 to 1864. It first attracted the attention of the authorities

* Norman Chevers, *Manual of Medical Jurisprudence*, Calcutta, 1870, p. 145.

in 1861 and was reported on in 1863 by Dr. Elliott, who traced it back as far as 1824 and noted that "a peculiar type of fever was prevalent in Jessore for many years previous to its first appearance in the district of Nadiā." This epidemic was investigated by a Committee (usually referred to as the Epidemic Commission) in 1864, in which year it ceased. While, however, the epidemic was wearing itself out in the Presidency Division, it spread slowly westwards into the Burdwān Division, where it became particularly severe in 1869 and raged until 1874, thus acquiring the name of Burdwān fever.

Between 1880 and 1885 there was another severe epidemic of fever. The outbreak commenced in the Jhenida subdivision, chiefly in the villages on the banks of the rivers Nabagangā Kabadak, Bhairab and Chītrā, to the silting up of which it was attributed. The fever was reported to be of choleraic type, and in 1880 the death-rate from it was as high as 41·25 per mille in the Gaighātā thāna. In the following year the fever death-rate in the Kotchāndpur and Bangāon thānas was 28·21 and 28·54 per mille, and the disease spread to the Kāliganj thāna in the heart of the district. In 1883 the Sanitary Commissioner reported that it "prevailed much more extensively and fatally than in the preceding year." The death-rate in that year rose to 31 per mille in Jhenida, and it exceeded 25 per mille over the north and west of the district in the two following years. In 1885 the mortality was 33·89 per thousand in the west of Jhenida subdivision, and excluding the eastern thānas, the death-rate (from fever alone) averaged little less than 25 per mille down to 1891.

The epidemic was enquired into by the Nadiā Fever Commission of 1881-82, which could discover no specific cause, but considered that it had its source in the silting up of the main rivers and the general insanitary condition of the villages. It was, at the same time, satisfied that there was no foundation for the impression generally entertained by the people themselves that it was due to the embankments of roads and railways obstructing the natural drainage of the country.

Since 1891 fever of a less virulent type has been prevalent and formed the subject of a special enquiry by the Drainage Committee in 1906-07. The conclusions at which the Committee arrived were—"(1) The whole district is extremely unhealthy; (2) malarial fever prevails extensively everywhere; (3) by a rather arbitrary comparison, the thānas of Jhenida, Gaighātā, Salikha and Bagharpārā are the most malarious; (4) the least malarious are thānas Barkaliā, Lohāgarā, Kotchāndpur and Gadkhāli (now Jhingergāchhā)."

VITAL STATISTICS.

The marginal table shows for the 10 years ending in 1910 the contrast between the birth-rate and death-rate per mille, and also demonstrates how largely deaths from fever bulk in the returns.

YEARS.	Average birth-rate.	Average death-rate (all causes).	Average death-rate (fever).
1901-1910 ...	32·54	36·41	29·13

As will be illustrated later, the mortality ascribed to malarial fever is not so great as would appear from the statistics, but there can be little doubt as to its prejudicial effect on the birth-rate both by causing abortion and still-birth, and also probably by diminishing the reproductive powers in the case of persons whose systems are weakened by continual attacks.

PRINCIPAL DISEASES.

Fever.

For the purposes of the enquiry conducted by the Drainage Committee in 1906-07, a special analysis was made of 398 deaths registered as fever. The result was to show that the average death-rate directly due to malaria is about 10·6 per mille, *i.e.*, about 19,000 or 20,000 persons die annually of this disease alone in Jessore. It was also found that acute and chronic malaria are together responsible directly for 34·9 per cent. of the total number of deaths returned as due to 'fever,' while phthisis is responsible for 9 per cent., and dysentery and diarrhœa for 11·3 per cent. These figures, however, do not represent the total mortality due to these diseases, as some cases of phthisis are probably returned under the heading 'other causes' in the returns of mortality, and a small proportion (roughly 1 in 60 cases) of the deaths caused by dysentery and diarrhœa are returned under the correct heading. At the same time, it is well known that malaria, and the lowered vitality resulting from it, is a predisposing cause in both phthisis and dysentery so that probably it is responsible in part for their prevalence and for the mortality ascribed to them. It was estimated that Leishman-Donovan infection caused 1 per cent. of the fever deaths; it was difficult to separate this disease from chronic malaria by the method of enquiry pursued, but it does not appear to be common in Jessore.

Altogether 644 blood examinations of children under 12 years of age were made in 25 villages, and it was ascertained that out of every 100 children examined, 66 suffered from enlargement of the spleen, and 34 actually had malaria parasites in their blood. Malignant tertian parasites were found in 69 per cent., benign tertian in 20 per cent., and quartan in 11

per cent. of the 644 blood specimens dealt with. The spleen-rate of the whole district (based on an examination of 5,147 children) was found to be 62, or in other words 62 children out of every 100 had suffered from repeated attacks of malaria causing enlargement of the spleen.

As regards the age incidence, it was found that about half the deaths due to malaria occur in children under 10 years of age, and that by far the largest number of children dying from acute malaria are under five years; out of 128 deaths of children under 10 registered as due to fever, no less than 32 per cent. were caused by acute malaria and 19·5 by chronic malaria. Among adults over 20 years of age, out of 215 deaths from fever, 13 per cent. were due to acute malaria and 12·6 per cent. to chronic malaria. Malaria does not, therefore, form so large a proportion of the fever deaths in the case of adults as in the case of children, but still there is a large adult mortality due to it. Dysentery and diarrhœa were responsible chiefly for deaths under five years; phthisis was most common in middle age, and pneumonia and bronchitis in middle and old age. As regards the seasonal incidence of malaria, it is heaviest, as might be expected, towards the end of the rains and the early part of the cold weather, *i.e.*, at the time when the country is drying up, when the pools and marshes which afford breeding places for mosquitoes are most numerous, and when chills causing recrudescences of malarial attacks are most likely to occur.

The general conclusions arrived at by the enquiring officers are as follows:—

"The excessive prevalence of malaria in the district as a whole can be attributed directly to the great facilities afforded to the breeding of mosquitoes, chiefly by the presence in and round the villages of jungle, dirty tanks, ditches, marshes and casual water in every direction, and, in a lesser degree, to the *bils* and dead rivers acting in the same way in some cases. In its turn, the presence of so much water in the villages is due in part to the carelessness and ignorance of the inhabitants, and in part to the want of natural drainage in the country owing to its position in a deltaic tract, where the process of land-building is still going on. The rivers are gradually heightening their banks and beds until the drainage is away from instead of towards them. The sub-soil water is unable to drain away rapidly, remains long at a high level after a wet season, and prevents the soaking in of rain-water, resulting in casual collections of water remaining for long periods in every hollow, natural and artificial. It is the combination of these two factors, the high sub-soil water

and the jungly and insanitary condition of the villages, that results in so high a malaria rate. The pits, hollows and jungle in the villages would in themselves be insufficient to account for so great a prevalence of the disease, were they not combined with the lack of natural drainage, which allows the surface collections of water to remain for so long a time; and on the other hand, so far as our present knowledge goes, the high sub-soil water has no connection with the disease except in so far as it is a cause of these surface collections of water. The silting up of the rivers is merely one sign of the lack of natural drainage, and, apart from that, is not in itself a cause of malaria to any large extent."

Cholera. The medical records of the district show a long succession of epidemics of cholera; in fact, they have occurred almost every year since 1880. In 1881 the death-rate from cholera alone was 17·47 per thousand in thāna Jhenida and 11·92 in Kotchāndpur. In 1882 it was reported that "at Jhenida and Sailkupa, where the disease prevailed extensively and severely, its special virulence—the death-rate in Jhenida was 10·23 per mille—was displayed on the banks of the Nabagangā river, the extremely foul waters of which were at one time rapidly subsiding." In 1883 the death-rate from this disease in Bangāon thāna was 10·47, in Gaighātā 7·30, and in Garapota 6·55 per thousand. In 1884 nearly all the northern and western thānas returned a mortality from the same disease exceeding 6 per mille. In 1885 again the death-rate from cholera in Bangāon thāna was 13·13, in Garapota 7·48, and in Gaighātā 5·45 per thousand; in this year the practice of throwing the corpses of victims of the disease into the semi-stagnant rivers of the Bangāon subdivision was held to be the chief cause of its great prevalence. Its ravages diminished in this quarter in subsequent years, but there was much cholera in the east of the district in 1889-90. In the next decade (1891-1900) there were no less than 60,000 deaths caused by cholera, the worst epidemics being those of 1892 and 1895, when the death-rate per mille was 5·97 and 5·35 respectively During the subsequent 10 years the mortality has been less, amounting to 57,500 in all, but the district has never been free from the disease; and in 1904, 1907 and 1908 the death-rate rose to over 4 per mille.

DRAINAGE SCHEMES. The schemes hitherto proposed or attempted for the improvement of the drainage of the district have mostly aimed at the diversion of the water of one river into another. In 1823, Rs. 47,000 were spent in opening up the Bhairab in the hopes of improving the flow at Jessore and thereby diminishing malaria, but the works were destroyed by floods. Next year Rs. 37,000

were sanctioned for their reconstruction—with what result is not clear, but obviously it was unsuccessful. It is believed that some time before 1850 an attempt was made to reopen the Nabagangā but failed, as the cut again silted up. Subsequently, in 1875, a scheme for reopening this channel was put forward by the local officers and enquired into by Mr. Wickes, Executive Engineer. His conclusion, which was accepted by Government, was to the effect that "it is quite impracticable (to re-open the Nabagangā) at any reasonable cost; if opened, it would probably silt up again, and even supposing that it could successfully be kept open, the disadvantages would outweigh the advantages; for though it might supply water, when it is now needed, it would supply a great deal too much and would inundate the country disastrously unless bunded."

Of the drainage schemes which have been proposed during recent years, the most important is that for the drainage of the Bhairab, generally known as the "Bhairab valley scheme," though this is a misnomer as the Bhairab does not flow in a valley. This project, which has been abandoned, contemplated straightening the bed of the river by cuts, so as to improve the flow in it, and making cuts from the neighbouring *bils*, so as to give a better flush in the river by bringing in an increased volume of water during and after the rains. Other schemes which have been mooted are—(1) the re-excavation of the Muchikhāli Khāl, with the idea of bringing water from the Garāi into the Kumār near Māgurā. (2) The drainage of the country along the course of the Beng. (3) The drainage of the country along the course of the Betna. (4) A connection between the Kumār and Nabagangā near Madiar Hoār in the Jhenida subdivision, with the object of bringing more water into the latter channel; a suggestion has also been made to block the Dhopāghātā Khāl in order to keep the water of the Nabagangā in its own bed, which at present is here diverted. (5) The deepening of the Bhawānīpur Khāl in the Jhenida subdivision with the same object, *i.e.*, in order to bring water from the Kumār to the Nabagangā. (6) The reopening of the Hanu river in the Māgurā subdivision by a connection with the Garāi, which, it is hoped, would improve the health of the Srīpur outpost. (7) The opening of the Nabaganga below Lohāgara so as to connect it with the Madhumati.

Regarding the first six projects the Drainage Committee remark:—"It will be observed that the old idea of diverting the water of one river into another figures largely in these suggestions. Although we express no final opinion, pending further examination of the facts, we would only note that past experience has

shown that such schemes frequently fail in two ways: either the water will not continue to run in the artificial course designed, or the diversion of the water will do as much harm to the old channel as good to the new."

Vaccination is compulsory only in municipal areas, but does not meet with any marked opposition outside them. In 1910-11 the number of persons successfully vaccinated was 72,919, representing 36·9 per mille of the population; the ratio for the preceding 5 years was 40·69 per mille. Small-pox, as a rule, only breaks out sporadically. The records of the district show that since 1892, when the present system of vital statistics was introduced, the death-rate from small-pox has never exceeded 0·25 per mille. VACCINATION.

The following table shows the different public charitable dispensaries in the district with details of their administration for the year 1910. MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS.

Name.	Income from: Municipal grant.	District Board grant.	Government contributions.	Private subscriptions, endowments and other sources.	Total.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Jessore	1,600	(a) 2,274	1,089	575	5,538
Kotchāndpur	1,403	200	23	66	1,692
Maheshpur	349	300	13	29	691
Jhenida	......	1,434	110	250	1,794
Māgurā	......	1,469	124	202	1,795
Sridharpur	......	802	18	20	840
Narāil	......	1,653	58	104	1,815
Bangāon	......	1,230	113	197	1,540
Keshabpur	......	807	19	109	935
Naohātā	......	325	18	442	785
Raigrām	......	450	14	136	600
Lohāgarā	......	793	22	354	1,169
Kālia	......	300	15	356	671
Sripur...	......	300	18	234	552

Name.	Expenditure.	Total number treated.			Daily average number.	
		In-patients.	Out-patients.	Total.	In-patients.	Out-patients.
	Rs.					
Jessore	5,324	423	14,842	15,265	14·70	83·93
Kotchāndpur	1,692	30	12,242	12,272	·87	72·11
Maheshpur	691	...	3,855	3,855	...	36·34
Jhenida	1,794	78	9,810	9,888	1·83	42·57
Māgurā	1,795	48	11,758	11,806	1·37	76·82
Sridharpur	840	...	3,657	3,657	...	42·59
Narāil	3,340	92	13,808	13,900	2·39	81·00
Bangāon	1,540	85	9,550	9,635	1·78	48·39
Keshabpur	935	...	8,112	8,112	...	48·44
Naohātā	788	...	4,433	4,433	...	26·62
Raigrām	635	...	5,425	5,425	...	44·87
Lohāgarā	1,169	...	8,100	8,100	...	65·77
Kālia	1,127	...	2,749	2,749	...	29·67
Sripur	698	...	2,745	2,745	...	22·35

(a) Rupees 2,166 from District Board fund and Rs. 108 from the Saiyadpur Trust Estate.

CHAPTER V.

AGRICULTURE.

GENERAL CONDITIONS. IN the south and south-east of the district the lands are low, the rivers are tidal, and there are many *bils* or morasses. In the north and north-west the land is higher, having been raised by the deposit of silt from the rivers which traverse it. This process has now stopped owing to the rivers having silted up at their head, the result of which is that the periodical inundations, which used to occur when they were in flood, have ceased. In the Jhenida subdivision there have been no floods for the last 15 years, and the country is the poorer for it; while in the Māgurā subdivision the floods are now comparatively slight and the land is not fertilized to the same extent as formerly. In the higher tract to the north, jute, tobacco, sugarcane and various cold weather crops are grown in addition to rice (chiefly the *āus* or autumn crop), and the date-palm is extensively cultivated. The country to the south, which is lower and less thickly populated, is chiefly under paddy cultivation, *āman* or winter rice predominating.

SOILS. The soil in the north of the district is highly fertile; it is formed half of clay and half of sand, although towards the west the clay preponderates. The tract lying between the Nabagangā and the Kumār was formerly a vast swamp, but has been reclaimed and yields abundant harvests of rice. In the Māgurā subdivision the soil is loamy for a depth of six or seven feet, and below that it is sandy; but in some parts it is so hard, that it is almost impervious to the spade and cannot be prepared for cultivation unless it is softened by inundation. In the Narāil subdivision clay predominates near the *bil* lands, and elsewhere the soil is loamy.

In low-lying depressions lying between rivers, there is a heavy clay suited to rice cultivation, which is called *matiāl*. Outside this area the soil may be broadly subdivided into two classes—(1) *doas* (half-clay and half-sand), and (2) *bālia* (sandy). *Doas* is a loose friable soil, brown in colour; it comes next to *matiāl* in point of productiveness and is very favourable to the

growth of *āus*, jute and *rabi* crops. *Bālia* is a poor sandy soil, which yields a scanty harvest of *āus* and jute, but is fit for oil-seeds, melons, etc.

Land on the outskirts of *bīls* is locally known as *samka matiāl* or *kharya matiāl.* This soil contains traces of limestone in its composition and becomes loose on absorbing rain water. It is less productive than *matiāl.* The date trees, which are reared in large numbers all over the district, thrive on lands known as *nonopanta* or *raspanta.* The retention of moisture is one of the chief characteristics of this soil, which comes under the category of *doas* and has a reddish tinge. Lands of this kind are found in patches all over the district.

PRINCIPAL CROPS.

On low lands *āman* paddy is cultivated, and on lands of intermediate level *āus* paddy, jute and *rabi* crops, pulses and oil-seeds are grown. Date-palms, cocoanuts and fruit trees are cultivated on an extensive scale on high lands, while melons of different kinds are grown on sandy soil on river banks in the spring. The following table shows the normal area of the principal crops and their percentage on the normal net cropped area, according to statistics compiled by the Agricultural Department in 1907.

Name of crop.	Normal acreage.	Percentage on normal net cropped area.	Name of crop.	Normal acreage.	Percentage on normal net cropped area.
Winter rice	511,300	44	Summer rice	12,500	1
Sugarcane	13,400	1	Wheat	1,300	...
			Barley	3,700	...
			Gram	24,800	2
Total *aghani* crops ...	524,700	45	Other *rabi* cereals and pulses.	123,000	11
			Other *rabi* food-crops ...	9,500	1
Autumn rice	360,900	31	Linseed	31,000	3
Other *bhadoi* cereals and pulses.	13,000	1	Rape and mustard ...	42,900	4
			Til (*rabi*)	19,200	2
Other *bhadoi* food-crops	27,800	2	Other oil-seeds	5,000	...
Jute	99,700	9	Tobacco	22,500	2
Indigo	700	..	Other *rabi* non-food crops.	3,900	...
Til (*bhadoi*)	3,200	...			
Other *bhadoi* non-food crops.	9,700	1			
			Total *rabi* crops ...	299,300	26
Total *bhadoi* crops ...	515,000	44	Orchards and garden produce.	25,500	2
			Twice-cropped area ...	203,400	17

Rice.

The staple crop of the district is rice, which, according to the above table, occupies no less than 76 per cent. of the normal net cropped area. The three principal crops are *āman*, *āus* and *boro*. *Āmān* or winter rice is cultivated in fairly low land, where the water lies in the rains from one to three feet deep. The

land is ploughed four times before sowing which takes place in April and May. Except in marsh lands (*bils*) the young shoots are transplanted about July and harvesting commences in November and December.

Aus rice is sown on higher ground than the *āman;* it is not transplanted, and the land yields a second or winter crop of pulses or oil-seeds. For *āus* cultivation, the preparation of the land commences early in January; sowing takes place in March and April, and reaping between the middle of August and the middle of September. The land selected for this kind of rice is ploughed five or six times.

Boro rice is sown on marshes which dry up in winter, and the preparation of the land commences in the middle of November. Sowing takes place ten days later, and reaping lasts from the middle of March till the middle of April. The land is hardly ploughed at all, the seed being scattered broadcast in the marshes or *bils* as they dry up. The young shoots are transplanted when about a month old and sometimes a second time a month latter.

In the Narāil subdivision, a long-stemmed variety called *boro-āman* is sown, the stubble of the previous year's crop being first burnt down and the ashes, which serve as manure, ploughed into the soil. The stubble is fired; on hot dry days, it is a remarkable sight, as the evening closes in, to see large *bils* on fire, dense clouds of smoke being borne along by the evening breeze and blotting out the landscape like a thick fog. This variety of rice is principally grown in the marshes (*bils*), many of which dry up in winter, and are flushed again in the rains. It grows to a height of from 12 to 15 feet, and will live in almost any depth of water, provided that the water rises gradually after the seedlings have attained a height of from 12 to 18 inches. A rapid rise would swamp the plant; but the growth easily keeps pace with a rise of an inch or two in 24 hours. The stem adapts itself to every fluctuation in the flood, its long-jointed divisions resting in layers on the bottom when the water falls, and floating with the next rise. The crop is an easy one to cultivate, for after the grass and straw on the dried up lands is burnt down, little ploughing is required. Sown broadcast on the edges of the *bils*, when the water is low, it rises as the water rises and is ripe before the water has disappeared.

Jute. Next to rice, jute covers a larger area than any other single crop. Thirty years ago, however, it was reported that the ryots merely cultivated a few plots near their homesteads, chiefly for their own use, such plots seldom exceeding three or four *kāthās*. In the Narāil subdivision, jute cultivation had begun to be

carried on a larger scale, but throughout the district there was no extensive trade in the fibre; the area occupied by the crop was roughly estimated in 1873 at 6,000 to 7,000 acres. One cause of this limited cultivation was stated to be that nearly all the land available after the sowing of the food-grains was taken up by indigo. Now Jessore is one of the principal jute growing districts of the province, the returns for 1907-08 showing no less than 142,800 acres under this crop. In 1908-09 the area under jute was reduced to 49,800 acres, and in 1910-11 to 40,000 acres, this decrease being attributed to a heavy fall in the price of jute and high prices obtained for food-grains. Two varieties of jute are grown, viz., *deshi* in the Sadr, Jhenida and Bangān subdivisions and *bilayāti* or *deora* in the Magura and Narail subdivisions; the former fetches a higher price in the market.

The seasons of sowing and growth are much the same as for the early (*āus*) rice crop. After the usual ploughing, the seed is sown broadcast from the middle or end of March to the beginning of June, and the plant is generally cut from the middle of August to the middle of October. Before it is cut the plant grows stout and strong, and is from five to ten feet in height. The stalks when cut are made up in bundles and are then at once immersed in water. The steeping process is called retting. While the bundles are under water, they are examined from time to time to test how far decomposition has progressed, and as soon as it is found that the fibres peel off readily, the bundles are taken out of the water and the separation of the fibre begins. The process of separation most generally followed is to beat or shake the stalks in the water in which they are steeped till the glutinous substance in the bark is entirely washed away. The fibre is then dried in the sun, and, when dry, is made up into hanks for the market.

When the jute has been prepared, the ryot carries the bundles, into which the hanks are made up, to the nearest market, or to the large marts, according to local circumstances, and there sells it to traders, who take the produce away, and, in their turn, dispose of it to wholesale dealers. Petty traders also go about from homestead to homestead making purchases of the fibre, which they either dispose of on their own account or make over to the merchants from whom they have received advances.

Date-palm cultivation.

In Jessore the cultivation of the date-palm for the production of sugar is of special importance: it is, in fact, the chief date-sugar-growing district in Bengal. The soil best suited for date plantations is a light loam, but the chief consideration is that the

and must be situated above inundation level. As a rule, ground is chosen which is too high for the successful cultivation of rice. The trees are planted in regular rows, the standard distance between the trees being about 12 feet; the number of trees in a plantation of 1 acre will therefore be a little over 300. Transplantation is the ordinary method of sowing adopted, but there are many cultivators who are not in favour of this practice. Date fields are often sown with pulse crops the first year after transplanting, but skilful date-growers will not sow auxiliary crops until after 3 or 4 years, when the plantation is well established. *Aus* paddy is not an uncommon subsidiary crop, but its produce when thus sown is not good, being fit only for providing straw. The idea of growing such crops is to keep the land in a state of proper cultivation. Annual hoeings are given (with the *kodāli*) for the first 3 or 4 years, when no crop is taken from the land.

Tapping commences when the tree is "ripe" *i.e.*, after seven or eight years of growth, and it is continued thereafter from year to year until the crown of the tree presents a withered and half-dead appearance and is no more erect. Some trees show over 40 notches, indicating that they have been continuously tapped for as many years. It is said that transplanted trees yield sap earlier than those sown in the field. The insect most injurious to the date-palm is a larva known locally as *maira* or *kora*, which bores out the heads and eats up the top leaves of the plant, causing it to wither.* An account of the tapping of the palms and the processes of sugar manufacture will be found in Chapter VIII.

Tobacco cultivation.

Tobacco is another special crop of Jessore, being largely grown for trade and export. The cultivation is of special importance in the Bangâon subdivision, where the best tobacco is grown. This is a variety of *deshi* tobacco (Nicotiana tabacum) called *hingli*, from the village of Hingli situated on the left bank of the Jamunà river, 4 miles west of Gaighātā. It sells for Rs. 5 to Rs. 7 or Rs. 8 per maund, and some special qualities of the leaf are said to fetch as much as Rs. 20 per maund. The following is an account of the methods of cultivation and curing.

In April and May, both the nurseries and the tobacco fields are manured with *bil* silt consisting of decomposing water-plants and with well-rotted cow-dung. They are repeatedly ploughed and the clods crushed with a *mai*, or ladder, four times every month if possible. The seeds are sown in the nurseries in the latter half of August, and the seedlings are transplanted in the first

* N. N. Banerji, *The Date Sugar Palm*, Quarterly Journal of the Agricultural Department, Bengal, January 1908.

half of October, when they are 3 or 4 inches high. They are planted in rows 18 inches apart and about the same distance apart in the rows. Immediately after transplantation they are watered, and they are generally given two more waterings later, once when the plants are about 6 inches high, and again in the first half of December some 10 or 12 days before harvesting. The fields are hoed twice or thrice after watering or after a fall of rain. The plants are topped when they get 12 or 13 leaves, and then suckering goes on regularly every eight days till harvesting. The plants are cut when the leaves hang down, turn colour and have spots upon them. No rotation is practised, for tobacco after tobacco is said to give the best results.

The plants are harvested in January, and carted off at once to a grassy plot to prevent the dust of the fields sticking to the leaves. There they are cut up into three pieces, each piece having from two to five leaves. The pieces are spread out in the sun for three days, at the end of which they are gathered together and hung up on grass ropes inside cow-sheds and houses. They are left alone for a couple of months till the south wind, bringing fogs with it in the morning, sets in and the leaves are in 'case,' as it is called. The leaves are then taken down with the ropes, cut into pieces of about 18 or 20 inches with the leaves hanging from them, and tied into loops.

Sweating or fermentation now begins. A number of bamboos are spread on the floor of the house with some straw placed upon them to keep off the damp. Over the straw the tobacco is piled up in heaps of 50 or 60 maunds covered with gunny sheets The temperature rises as fermentation proceeds, and the degree of heat is felt by the hand from time to time. When the proper temperature is reached, the heap is broken up and rearranged to prevent overheating; the top and bottom leaves go to the centre and the inside leaves come to the outside, so that fermentation may proceed evenly. The interval between building the first heap and breaking it up varies, depending upon the 'case' or moisture in the leaves, and a third heaping may be necessary if the leaves are still soft.

Pepper and chillies.

Pepper is cultivated in the north of Jessore in the country adjacent to the Chuādāngā subdivision of Nadiā and in the tract lying between Jhingergāchhā and Keshabpur. This is almost the only part of the Province where it is cultivated, for elsewhere in Bengal it only grows wild during the rainy season. The creeper is planted in the beginning of the rains; as it grows in the shade, the seeds of the stout *dhunecha* hemp plants are sown near to it to afford shelter as they grow. The preparation

of pepper for sale is a simple process. The pods, which when first picked are of a yellow or light red colour, are put out in the sun to dry; and in January and February (the picking season) on the places where they are exposed are a blaze of colour. After some few days' exposure they are dry and attain a deeper hue of red, after which they are packed in sacks for export. Chillies are also largely grown as cold weather crops in the south of the district.

EXTENSION OF CULTIVATION.

According to the returns of the Agricultural Department for 1910-11, out of the total area of 1,872,153 acres which makes up the district, the net area cropped was 1,104,500 acres. Current fallows accounted for 127,620 acres, and culturable waste other than fallow for 28,620 acres, while the area not available for cultivation was 611,413 acres. The small area of culturable waste is noticeable as showing that cultivation has apparently almost reached its utmost limit. The following table gives the salient agricultural statistics of that year in percentages:—

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL AREA		PERCENTAGE TO CULTIVABLE AREA OF		PERCENTAGE OF GROSS CULTIVATED AREA UNDER			
Cultivable.	Net cultivated.	Net cultivated.	Double cropped.	Rice.	Other cereals and pulses.	Jute.	Other crops.
67·3	59·0	80·5	14·3	76·6	8·6	3·8	11·0

With this statement may be compared the estimate made by Lord McDonnell in his *Report on the Food Grain Supply of Bihar and Bengal* (1876). The area under tillage in the Jhenida and Māgurā subdivisions was, he estimated, 75 per cent. of the gross area. For the Bangāon subdivision the Subdivisional Officer estimated that five-eighths of the total area was under cultivation, but Lord McDonnell considered that this was an under-estimate and that the proportion of cultivated land was not less than in the other two subdivisions.

It is reported that cultivation has suffered from the deterioration of the rivers, which year by year used to deposit a layer of silt on their banks and in the *bīls* during flood time. Many are choked with weeds and no flood water down goes them, so that

this natural form of fertilization has ceased. The Jhenida subdivision is said to have suffered much from the drying up of its rivers; in the Māgurā subdivision the area under *āman* rice is contracting owing to deficient floods, but on the other hand the area under *āus* rice and jute is increasing. Indigo cultivation has practically disappeared, and so has that of *gānja*, though Jessore was at one time one of the chief centres of *gānja* and indigo cultivation in Bengal. Their place has now been taken by jute, the area under which has, as already shown, expanded enormously during the last 30 years.

CHAPTER VI.

NATURAL CALAMITIES.

FLOODS. THE district was formerly subject to destructive floods, but inundations are now rare owing to fluvial changes. Within the last century nearly all the rivers have degenerated into drainage channels which carry off the surplus local rainfall and no longer convey the water of the Ganges to the sea. A century ago, the country between the Kumār and Nabagangā, which, although still low marshy land, is now only reached by unusual inundations, was annually swept by violent floods. The Nabagangā was then a dreaded river, and much money was spent in maintaining embankments along its southern bank, the remains of which may still be seen. Now, the north-west of the district is becoming higher and drier every year. The tract north of the Kumār, however, is still subject to floods periodically, when the Kalīgangā and Dakho Khāl become deep and rapid streams. In the extreme south also, in the Manirāmpur thāna, a small area is liable to inundations of salt water brought up by the tides, which cause destruction to the crops owing to the length of time they take to subside.

There is ample evidence of the number and severity of the floods which swept across the north of the district at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. Sir James Westland mentions that the Mahmūdshāhi embankments burst in 1787 and that this occurrence, followed by a cyclone, did great injury. In 1790 there was a heavy flood, which damaged the Yusufpur and Saiyadpur estates, and in 1795 there was another inundation, which, however, was slight and did little harm; in the following year again much loss was caused by a flood and a cyclone. There was another series of floods from 1798 to 1801, that of 1798 being the highest within the memory of the oldest inhabitants. The adjacent districts apparently suffered much more than Jessore itself, for the people had recourse to Jessore for their supplies of grain. Sir James Westland connects the unexampled floods from 1795 to 1801 with the opening out of the Madhumatī already referred to in Chapter I.

Among more recent floods, those of 1838, 1847 1856 and 1871 are the most memorable. That of 1838 was specially severe, while the inundation of 1871 was the most calamitous known for many years. In the latter year, heavy rain fell in May and at the beginning of June, and the rivers began to rise rapidly, till in August nearly the whole district was submerged. The people suffered great hardships, and the loss of cattle and of crops was very great.

Flood of 1885.

The last serious floods affecting Jessore were those of 1885 and 1890. The first great inundation occurred in September 1885, On the 11th September the river Jalangī rose nearly 29 feet above its lowest hot-weather level. The Lalitākuri embankment, which runs along the left bank of the river Bhāgirathi in the Murshidābād district, had already given way on the 24th August, and a vast tide swept southward across the centre of the Nadiā district and the west of Jessore. There were simultaneous freshets in both the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, and the water of the former, banked up at Goalundo by the latter, was forced to find egress to the sea by the rivers of the Nadiā district, which had been silting up for two centuries and were quite inadequate to carry such an immense volume of water as the Ganges was bringing down. About half of the Nadiā district was flooded to a depth of five to eight feet ; the Eastern Bengal Railway was breached in three places, and the mails were carried in steam launches over a country, which a few weeks before was dry land, covered by a promising rice crop. In Jessore 400 square miles of country were more or less flooded, with very divergent effects on the crops. The Māgurā and Narāil subdivisions reaped good crops of winter rice, but lost most of the *āus* ; while in the Sadar and Bangāon subdivisions the floods had the reverse effect, destroying most of the *āman*, but only slightly injuring the *āus*.

Flood of 1890.

In the autumn of 1890, when the district had barely recovered, it suffered from a similar disaster, and the crops were again destroyed. The Nadiā rivers rose a foot and a quarter higher than in 1885 ; the Lalitākuri embankment burst again, and the railway was seriously breached. The flood affected the greater part of the Bangāon subdivision and parts of the Jhenida and Sadar subdivisions, which suffered from the overflowing of the Ichhāmatī, Nabagangā and Betnā. In the affected area the *āman* rice was entirely destroyed and the outturn of *āus* was only half the average. The damage could not be remedied by fresh sowing or transplanting as the floods subsided late in the season ; but, on the other hand, the outturn of the *rabi* corps

helped to compensate the cultivators, and there was plenty of work for labourers after the flood subsided. Relief was freely given wherever needed, the district being divided into circles, each under a circle officer. The relief measures consisted of (1) agricultural loans, (2) supply of boats for the transportation of the people, their cattle and goods, (3) charity, and (4) employment of labourers on relief works maintained by the District Board.

EMBANKMENTS.

In the latter part of the 18th century, the maintenance of the then numerous embankments formed one of the Collector's most important duties ; the expenditure on them from 1798 to 1802 amounted to Rs. 78,680. They were subsequently placed in charge of an European Superintendent, and the burden of their cost transferred to the landholders, who were allowed a reduction of land revenue in consequence. Up to 1811, the district officers frequently went out to examine the embankments, but the changes in the river beds and lines of drainage soon after rendered them unnecessary. Even now, the embankments of the Nabagangā are traceable for some miles upon both sides of Māgurā. At many places they are washed away, and stand only two feet high ; but at others their height is eight feet, and they are still strong enough to resist heavy floods.

FAMINE.

The district is not subject to drought, and the number of rivers, creeks and swamps is so great that no irrigation works are required. From 1787 to 1801, when Jessore was frequently inundated, famines due to the destruction of crops by floods were no means rare. In 1787 much distress was caused by floods in September and a cyclone in October. A great quantity of rice floated away, or was submerged and rotted ; the *til* crop was completely destroyed ; and the date-trees, mustard seed, and pulse crops were seriously injured. Prices rose rapidly, the cultivators sold their ploughs and other agricultural implements, and flocked to Jessore, offering their children for sale. After various ineffectual measures taken by Government, Mr. Henckell, the then Magistrate, advanced Rs. 15,000 to the cultivators and spent Rs. 6,000 in repairing the embankments. He had already induced the zamīndār of Yusufpur to advance Rs. 5,000 to his tenants ; and the *boro dhān*, or spring rice crop, cultivated with his money, materially improved the situation. It is worthy of notice, that even in the year of this famine, the whole of the Government land revenue demand was realized.

In 1791 the district was visited by drought, the Collector reporting on the 20th October that there had been no rain for thirty-eight days. The realization of the revenue was twice

postponed, and, as in 1787, the Government forbade the exportation of grain by sea. On the 31st December 1791, prices had risen to twice and thrice their usual rates. The opening of all tanks and reservoirs, which the Government ordered as a remedial measure, had no effect, as the water-level in them was low and the water could not of itself flow from them over the surrounding fields. An abundant harvest in 1794 induced the Government to establish public granaries,—two in Jessore, one at Bābukhāli near Māgurā, and one at Shorganj, near Phultalā on the Bhairab. But misfortune pursued these granaries from the first. The buildings rapidly deteriorated; one was struck by lightning and burned down; the native agents employed in purchasing rice proved dishonest; many losses were entailed by the renewal of stock; the establishments involved a large annual outlay; and eventually, in 1801, the granary system was abolished.

There was some distress in 1866, when the maximum price of common rice was 10 seers per rupee, but in 1874 this district remained unaffected by the famine and was even able to export grain to Nadiā. A fuller account is required of the famine of 1897 as illustrating modern conditions.

Famine of 1897.

In 1895-96 there was an unusual drought resulting in a poor harvest. Heavy rain in May 1895 drowned the *boro* or summer rice, which is grown on low lands in the Narāil subdivision, and prevented the sowing of *āman* rice on such lands throughout the district. Short rainfall in July and August partially affected both the *bhadoi* and winter rice crops, and finally want of rain in November prevented the development of the winter rice. The preceding year, however, had yielded a bumper crop, and so the partial failure of the rice harvest in this year did not occasion much distress. Next year (1896-97) the rainfall in the district as a whole was 46·26 inches, or about the same as in 1895-96, but considerably less than that of 1894-95, which was 58·66 inches. The rainfall was not only short, but ill-distributed, and the outturn of the *āus* and the *āman* crops was consequently poor. The sowing of these crops was late for want of rain in April, and the scanty showers of May did not enable the plants to grow. There was some rain in June, but insufficient rainfall in July retarded the ripening of the *āus* rice, and the outturn was less than had been expected. Again, the short rain of August and the absence of rain in October and November prevented a fair return from the standing *āman* crop, which in many places failed entirely. In the end, the outturn of *āus* was 8 annas as against 10 annas in 1895-96 and 17 annas in 1894-95, while that of *āman*

was 8½ annas as against 8 annas in 1895-96 and 16 annas in 1894-95. The *rabi* crops yielded an outturn of 5 annas only, as against 9 annas in 1895-96 and 8 annas in 1894-95.

The result was that the bulk of the people, who are agriculturists, were more or less distressed. The market however was supplied by importations, and the people had some purchasing resources from the good outturn of their jute crop. This, coupled with the proceeds of date-juice and sugar, which are important products of the district, enabled the people to tide over their difficulties. There was actual scarcity in an area of 1,082 square miles with a population of 829,000 persons, but the area for which relief works were found necessary was only 36 square miles with a population of 30,000. The portion affected lay in small tracts in thānas Muhammadpur, Keshabpur, Bagharpārā and Māgurā and in the Sālikhā outpost, and consisted of high lands along the banks of rivers and of some low-lying marshes. The affected area had hitherto been considered safe, for the people are in ordinary times well off, their prosperity depending to a great extent on the success of the *āman* rice crop, which seldom fails, and on the trade in date sugar. Unfortunately, there had been in this tract a partial failure of both *āus* and *āman* crops in the two previous years, while in 1896-97 the average outurn of *āman* rice was only 3 annas as against 10 annas in the previous year and of *āus* 7 annas as against 10 annas.

A test work was commenced in thāna Muhammadpur on the 25th February 1897 and was kept open till the 9th March, when it was closed, as it attracted no labourers. Test works were also started in June at Naohātā, Muhammadpur and Pachuriā, but were soon closed for the same reason. The aggregate number of persons employed on these works was 8,991, and the wages paid were Rs. 1,259. Gratuitous relief began in December 1896 and altogether 68,980 persons were relieved, but the highest daily average number was only 481 in April. Private relief was afforded by the Mahābodhi Society, which opened a relief centre at Lohāgarā and fed 1,026 persons, and by the Narāil zamīndārs, who fed 1,000 persons daily from the end of July to the end of August. Besides these measures of relief, Rs. 64,351 were advanced as agricultural loans.

CYCLONE OF 1909.

A severe cyclone struck the district on the 17th October 1909, the storm reaching Jessore at 2 P.M. (but not becoming cyclonic till after sunset) and Jhenida at 6 P.M., while at Bangaon its full force was not felt till 10 P M. At Jessore it was accompanied by torrential rain, the fall for the day being 12 inches. Considerable loss of property was caused by its ravages. The number of

country boats sunk was estimated at 1,157, while no less than 446,906 buildings were blown down. They consisted for the most part merely of thatched huts with wattled walls and roofs supported by bamboos, and in some cases of open sheds on bamboo supports. It must, moreover, not be supposed that the houses were completely destroyed. Many of them collapsed or had their roofs and walls damaged, but were capable of being re-erected, though at some cost and labour. Trees were blown down on all sides, and practically every road in Jessore town was blocked by them, traffic being stopped for several days. No coolies were obtainable at the time, though wages of Re. 1-8 a day were offered, for every one was busily engaged in restoring his own house; eventually jail labour had to be employed to clear the trees away. In the district, as a whole, it is estimated that 662,336 fruit trees were destroyed. Altogether 8,274 cattle were killed, chiefly in the Sadar and Narail subdivisions. The loss of human life was fortunately small, 70 deaths being reported, of which 40 occurred in the Sadar subdivision. Of the total number 36 were due to the fall of houses, 11 to falling trees and 16 to drowning.

CHAPTER VII.

RENTS, WAGES AND PRICES.

RENTS. THE rents paid in Jessore vary greatly according to the position and quality of the land, as will be seen from the marginal table showing the current rates reported by the Collector for different classes of land growing different crops. The rates of rent are said to be almost the same for all subdivisions except Bangāon, where the land is less fertile and the highest rent for rice land is only Rs. 3 an acre; on the other hand, as much as Rs. 6 to Rs. 9 per acre is paid for some lands in this subdivision on the bank of the Ichhāmatī, which produce melons and *patals*. It does not appear that the rents of the first two classes of land shown in the table have altered much since 1871, when the rent for *bāstu* land was reported to be Rs. 9 to Rs. 15 per acre, and of *bāgāt* land Rs. 9 to Rs. 18 per acre. The average rent for *dhāni* land was then 6 annas to Rs. 9 an acre, the average for ordinary rice land being about Rs. 3 per acre. Now, however, no land fit for cultivation can be had at so low a rate as annas 6 an acre.

Class of land.	Rent per acre in rupees.
Bāstu (homestead land)	10 to 15
Bāgāt (garden land)	10 to 20
Dhāni (rice land)	1-8 to 12
Palān (vegetable land)	3 to 9
Baraj (*pān* land)	8 to 20
Pulses, mustard and linseed.	3 to 4-8
Chillies ...	3 to 6-6
Date-palm trees ...	3-3 to 9
Sugarcane ...	3 to 7-8
Tobacco ...	4 (average).
Jute	2-10 to 2-13
Betel-nut and cocoanut trees.	10 to 16

One peculiar form of rent is that paid under the *utbandi* system, *i.e.*, the ryots pay rent only upon the area actually cultivated during the year, and by measurement at harvest time, according to the actual outturn of the crop. The cultivators till the land for two or three years and then allow it to lie fallow for a year or two, the fertility of the soil not being sufficient to allow of uninterrupted cultivation. No rent is paid for the period during which the land remains fallow.

No general settlement of rents has yet been carried out, but some private estates have been settled under the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act. The records of these settlements show that the maximum rate of rent is Rs. 10-8, minimum Rs. 4-8, and average Rs. 6 per acre for dry land, while the maximum, minimum and average rate for wet lands is Rs. 12, Rs. 9 and

Rs. 10-8 respectively: the rates last mentioned are applicable only to low-lying *bil* lands, which are very fertile. Recent experiences show that settlements are generally made with tenants on lump rentals and that the rate generally varies from Rs. 3 to Rs. 6-8 per acre.

A large amount of cultivation is carried on under what is known as the *barga* system, *i.e.*, by means of produce rents. Where this system is in force, Hindus and Muhammadans of the lower classes cultivate the land, generally, on condition that the produce is equally divided between them and the tenants or owners. In some places, however, this rule is not adhered to, and the actual cultivators, who are known as *bargadārs* or *bargaits*, make agreements by which they are entitled to more than half the produce. PRODUCE RENTS.

In the Māgurā subdivision, the *bargadārs*, as a rule, agree to pay half the produce only when the owner or tenant supplies the necessary seed. The extent of the share also depends upon the quality of the soil. For first class land the owner does not supply any seed, for second class land he supplies half the quantity required, for third class land he supplies it all. In cases where an owner does not agree to this arrangement, the *bargadār* will not pay as much as half the produce, and in the case of jute the owners only get a six annas share. In the Narail subdivision also the share is not always half and half, but varies according to the nature of the soil, the crops cultivated, the special agreements made, &c. In 1909 there was a general strike in one village of the Sadar subdivision on the part of the Muhammadan cultivators, who combined not to cultivate the lands of their Hindu landlords, unless the latter agreed to allow them to retain a two-thirds share of the produce instead of a half share, which was the prevailing rate hitherto.

The following table shows the daily wages paid to different classes of labourers during the last 15 years:— WAGES.

Class of labourers.	1894-95.	1899-1900.	1904-05.	1909-10.
	As. P.	As. P.	As. P	As. P.
Superior mason... ...	8 0	8 3	10 0	10 8
Common mason... ...	5 0	5 3	6 0	8 0
Superior carpenter ...	10 8	10 8	10 0	10 0
Common carpenter ...	8 0	8 0	8 0	8 0
Superior blacksmith ...	10 8	10 9	10 0	10 0
Common blacksmith ...	8 0	8 0	8 0	8 0
Adult male cooly ...	4 0	4 0	5 0	8 0
Adult female cooly ...	2 8	2 8	4 0	5 0

It is said that owing to the unhealthiness of the district there has been a decline in the number of skilled labourers for some years past, and that the supply of agricultural labourers is unequal to the demand, especially during the fever season, so much so that land sometimes remains uncultivated for want of men to till them. A considerable proportion of the field labourers or *krishāns* are paid in kind, especially when engaged in harvesting operations, *e.g.*, they receive one bundle of paddy for every 20 bundles they cut. Some of the *bargaits* previously mentioned are landless labourers. When the *bargait* cannot provide cattle, seed, etc., in fact, nothing but his own labour, an advance in money is usually made to him by the ryot who has the right to the other half of the crop. These advances are expended by the labourer in the purchase of seed, implements, cattle, etc., and are repaid by him with interest after harvest.

PRICES. The following table shows the average prices in seers per rupee of the staple food-grains and of salt for the last six years:—

	1905-06.		1906-07.		1907-08.		1908-09.		1909-10.		1910-11.	
	SRS.	CHS.	SRS.	CHS.	SRS.	CHS.	SRS.	CHS.	SRS.	CHS.	SRS.	CHS.
Common rice ...	10	11¾	7	11	7	14	8	0	11	0	12	2
Wheat	8	13¼	9	0	7	10	7	3½	7	5	8	4
Barley	9	13	8	6	8	0	7	6	8	2	11	10
Gram	13	14½	10	12	10	10	10	1	13	14	17	5
Salt	13	13½	14	0	16	12	17	6	18	9	18	11

There has been a remarkable rise in prices in recent years, which will be sufficiently illustrated by the fact that in 1897, which was a year of scarcity, the average price of common rice, which forms the staple food of the people, was 9 seers and 12 chittacks in March as against 15 seers 1 chittack in the previous year—the maximum price was 7½ seers per rupee (in the Māgurā subdivision)—while in 1866 (a year of famine) it was 10 seers per rupee. As a contrast with the present high range of prices may be mentioned the fact that 30 years ago the Collector reported—"Famine may be considered imminent when coarse rice rises to the price of eight seers per rupee. At this rate the poorer classes can barely live and they cannot hold out if the price rises higher."

MATERIAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE. Past accounts of the material condition of the people give a somewhat bright picture of prosperity. In the Statistical Account of Bengal, 1877, for instance, it was stated—"The husbandmen of Jessore, as a class, are well off. In the high-lying half of the district the date cultivation for sugar yields large profits, and in the lower tracts the land is fertile, and the crops as a rule abundant. The custom of giving *gānthi* grants, a kind of hereditary

and transferable tenure on a permanently fixed rent, also tends to elevate the position of the cultivator. The *gānthidār*, or grantee, is practically a small landholder, strong enough to resist oppression on the part of the superior landlord (zamīndār), but not sufficiently powerful to oppress the husbandmen or under-renters, who do the work of actual cultivation on his grant. A holding above eight acres (25 *bighās*) in extent would be considered a large one, and anything below two or three acres a very small one. A fair-sized holding would be about five acres (15 *bighās*) in extent; but a single pair of oxen are reported to be unable to cultivate more than 3½ acres. In the adjoining districts to the west it is generally reckoned that one pair of oxen can till five acres. A husbandman in Jessore district with a small farm of five acres is as well off as a petty shopkeeper, or as a hired servant on Rs. 8 a month in money. The peasantry are usually in debt, and few of them succeed in keeping out of is for any length of time."

In 1888 a special enquiry into the condition of the lower classes was carried out by the Collector, who reported as follows:—"Any man or woman in these parts can by honest labour better his or her position. The number of people in comparatively easy circumstances scattered all over the country create a demand for simple luxuries, and it is in supplying them that the poorer classes find work. Cows can be kept and tended and their milk sold, rice husked, baskets and mats made, vegetables grown. Then there is domestic service and, for men, the taking of land in *batai*, *i.e.*, on the metayer system. Except in the sugar industry there is little working for wages in these parts. However, men do so work, getting never less than two annas a day besides two meals. Moreover, their services are much in demand, and those of a hamlet of Muchis, for instance, who are ready to engage for daily wages, are much competed for. A large *jotdār* will offer them strong inducements to settle on his lands, and they make their own terms. In the sugar industry, the men who tap the trees and help the refiners command really good wages, but it is hard to put them into a daily rate as they are paid by piece work. Certainly they receive 4 annas a day; and then in their homesteads they have their livestock, cows, goats, ducks and fruit trees, besides a little cultivation.

"Another way to regard these matters is to look at the homes of the people. Here we are presented with an aspect of comfort that will compare favourably with the peasantry of even many European countries. I have had statistics prepared under my

immediate superintendence of nine large villages situated in different parts of the district. Cultivators with ten *bighās* and upwards I put in class I; those with less than ten *bighās*, but with enough to live on without working for daily wages, and fishermen and those having some other calling, are placed in class II. In class III are labourers and those with small means, and in class IV indigent people. Out of 798 homesteads examined, 155 belong to class I, 232 to class II, 365 to class III and 46 to class IV, but the latter included professional beggars: the true number was about 20, there being two or three really poor householders in a village. It will be seen that half of the people are in the first two classes.

"The houses of the first class are well built and well stocked with cattle and poultry. Each homestead is composed of four houses, often with little out-offices; and the agricultural implements and produce lying about are proofs of the possession of some substance. Men of this class generally have under-tenants and others in various degrees of dependence on them; and, where they have date-tree cultivation, they are extremely well off, as demonstrated by the clothes they wear and the air of comfort about their houses. These men are certainly not as a rule in debt, but are often money-lenders. This class comprises the numerous *lākhirājdārs*, who are mostly Hindus of good caste, and still more numerous *gānthidārs*, who are of all castes and Muhammadans. Class II are men fairly well off, but many are in embarrassed circumstances. They represent the poor respectables of the agricultural world. Class III includes all the low caste people, such as Muchis, who as labourers find work suitable to their position. The high rate of the wages they command suggests that they must be well off, and the well-fed appearance of themselves and their children satisfactorily proves it. The prosperity of the agricultural classes of this district is also secured by various extra crops, such as chillies, tobacco, turmeric and sugarcane; and then there are many men other than the cultivators with shares in such crops. On this ground, too, no statistics that merely dealt with areas of holdings and amount of rent paid would give any true conception of the condition of the peasantry. The weavers also of these parts are fairly numerous and gain a comfortable competence."

This account fails to take into consideration the extreme unhealthiness of the district. The death-rate is high, healthy people are said to be rare, and there can be no doubt that much misery is caused by the continual ravages of fever and the lowered vitality of the people. It also fails to allow for the indebtedness

of the people. On this point the Collector (a Bengali gentleman) writes :—

"If the above account represents the condition of the people 20 years ago, a true picture of the present day would certainly be darker and more gloomy. Several successive lean years have reduced the circumstances of the agriculturists and the labouring classes. The chronic indebtedness of the cultivating classes is almost proverbial. Even in a year of plenty they cannot get entirely out of the clutches of the *mahājan*. The extension of jute cultivation has worked some important changes in the condition of the people: while bringing some ready money into their pockets, it has considerably increased their ideas of comfort. The cultivators are now in many instances better housed and better clothed than before, but they now spend more than what they actually earn and this indebtedness is increasing year after year. The cost of living is steadily increasing, owing to a general rise in the prices of food-grains, as well as of the other necessaries of life. The condition of the middle class (*bhadra log*) and those living on small fixed incomes is also getting decidedly worse. Unfortunately, the people are excessively fond of litigation, and the stamp revenue shews a steady increase year after year."

CHAPTER VIII.

OCCUPATIONS, MANUFACTURES AND TRADE.

OCCUPATIONS. ACCORDING to the statistics obtained at the census of 1901, agriculture supports 71 per cent. of the population, industries 15 per cent., the professions 1·9 per cent., and trade 0·6 per cent. Of the agricultural population, 32 per cent. are actual workers, and these include 376,000 rent-payers and 30,000 rent-receivers; the number of the latter is unusually large for a Bengal district and is explained by the prevalence of subinfeudation. Of the industrial population 38 per cent. are actual workers, among them being 25,000 fishermen and fish-dealers, 14,000 cotton weavers and 6,000 persons engaged in husking rice, most of whom are women. The proportion of actual workers is higher in the case of the professional classes, viz., 44 per cent.; the returns show under this head 5,000 religious mendicants, 4,000 priests and 3,000 medical men. Among those engaged in other occupations are 44,000 general labourers, 11,000 herdsmen, 6,000 *pālki*-bearers, 5,000 beggars and 3,000 boatmen.*

Agricultural classes. Of the local zamīndāri families possessing large landed properties, only one, viz., that of the Rājā of Naldāngā, is Brāhman, and most of the others are Kāyasths. There is one European zamīndār, Mr. Tweedie; he and the Raja of Naldāngā are the only two resident landlords of importance, the other zamīndārs being mostly absentees. The higher classes of Muhammadans and the Brāhmans, Baidyas and Kāyasths are generally tenure-holders. Their social status not allowing them to till the land with their own hands, they generally acquire a permanent interest in the land from the zamīndār, and then sublet it to others, who, in their turn, sublet it again, this process being continued until the actual occupier of the soil is reached. Thus, there stand between the zamīndār and the actual cultivator different sets of tenure-holders and under-tenure-holders, who have no interest in the land except as sharers in its rent. The Sheikhs and lower Hindu castes, such as Kaibarttas, Chāsādhopās, and Namasūdras, are usually occupancy and non-occupancy ryots; while the field labourers are usually Namasūdras or Sheikhs. A special class of field labourers consists

* Statistics for the census of 1911 are not yet available.

of the *dawals* or paddy-cutters, who flock to the rice-producing tracts in the winter season, and obtain employment in cutting the paddy of the ryots' fields.

Occupations of women.

Females belonging to the higher Hindu castes, viz., the Brāhmans, Baidyas and Kāyasths, and to the upper classes among Muhammadans are exclusively employed in domestic service in their husbands' or fathers' houses. Among the low castes, such as Bāgdis, the women assist the males in cultivation of their fields and agricultural pursuits. As regards industrial castes, the Bārui females arrange the betel-leaves into bundles before they are taken to the market for sale; Kumhār women assist in the preparation of earthen pots and in drying them in the sun; Mālākar females prepare artificial flowers from cork. Tānti females prepare the thread with which the males weave; while the Goālā and Mayrā females share, to a large extent, in the industrial pursuits of their caste. The Dhobi's wife constantly assists her husband in washing clothes, while Namasudra and Sheikh women help in gathering and husbanding the paddy crop. Females of the Kaibartta, Buna, Bāgdi and Dāi castes attend on the wealthier classes and thus earn something to help in defraying the household expenses; they generally work in the houses of the wealthier classes as maid-servants, those of the Dāi caste attending on new-born babes and serving as midwives and as nurses in the lying-in rooms. Buna, Bāgdi, Dom, Hāri, Muchi and Mehtar females earn regular wages by day labour; they are generally employed as street and house sweepers, while the Muchi females prepare and sell wickerwork and cane baskets and other utensils for domestic use. Muhammadan females of the lower classes also earn money by selling rice, milk, etc., and by doing the work of maid-servants in Muhammadan houses. Both among the Hindus and Muhammadans, some women of the inferior grades of society maintain themselves by husking paddy in the harvest season.

MANUFACTURES. Sugar manufacture.*

One of the most important industries in the district of Jessore is the cultivation and manufacture of date-sugar. Indeed, the ryots in the north and west of the district, and to some extent also in other parts of it, may almost be said to depend as much upon the cultivation of date-palms from which sugar is

* This account of sugar manufacture in Jessore has been compiled from Sir James Westland's *Report on the District of Jessore* (1874), an article, *Sugar Manufacture and Trade in Jessore*, published in the Statistical Reporter, 1876, two articles by Mr. N. N. Banerji entitled *The Date Sugar Palm and Manufacture of Date Sugar* (published in the Quarterly Journal of the Bengal Agricultural Department, January and April 1908), and notes contributed by the Collector.

produced, as upon any other branch of agriculture. This is no new development, for the district has long been prominent as a sugar-growing district. In 1788 the Collector, in enumerating the losses caused by the cyclone of 1787, specially referred to the injury to the date trees and the decrease of the sugar produce; in 1792, he reported that "date sugar is largely manufactured and exported"; in 1791 the annual produce was returned as 20,000 maunds, of which about one-half was exported to Calcutta. Of this, however, a considerable quantity was cane-sugar, which now-a-days has been driven from the fields and markets of Jessore by the produce of the date-palm.

In the first half of the 19th century the establishment of European factories gave a considerable impulse to the manufacture. The first English factory in Lower Bengal was at Dhobā in the Burdwān district, and was erected by Mr. Blake. When his profits began to decline, he formed a company, which purchased the works from him for 4½ lakhs.* The company had factories in this district at Kotchāndpur, where they set up English machinery, and also at Trimohinī, but failed about 1842. The Kotchāndpur factory then passed into the hands of Mr. Newhouse, who brought out the first vacuum pan, while Trimohinī became the property of Mr. Saintsbury, who worked it for three or four years and then closed it. The factory of Chaugāchhā was established about the same time (1842) by Gladstone Wyllie and Co., of Calcutta, and was first under the management of a Mr. Smith, and afterwards of a Mr. McLeod. There were out-factories at Keshabpur, Trimohinī, Jhingergāchhā, Nārikelberiā and Kotchāndpur; but as it worked at a profit for only a year or two, it was soon closed. After 1850 the factories at Chaugāchhā and Kotchāndpur alone were in working order, and they only manufactured sugar occasionally. A factory at Tāhirpur, which was built about 1853 by Mr. Newhouse, was worked for only two years, after which it was sold and converted into a rum-distillery.

From the summary given above, it will be obvious that the history of the English sugar refineries is not a record of success but of failure. The explanation is that, after they had developed the industry, native merchants stepped in and appropriated the trade to which they had given birth. The demand for native refined sugar was greater than that for the first-rate sugar manufactured by European means, and the Europeans consequently lost the trade. The pioneers among these native merchants appear to have been members of the Mayrā or confectioner

* The *Banks of the Bhāgirathī*, "Calcutta Review" (1846), Vol. VI, p. .

caste, who started operations about 1820. To those curious in such matters it may be interesting to know that these successful merchants were Rām Sen from Daulatganj in the Nadiā district, Bhagabān De, and Dasarath Indra, who were followed by others from Sātgāchhiā in Burdwān and Sāntipur in Nadiā. In course of time they practically monopolized the sugar trade, which throve until about 1890 when it began to suffer from the competition of imported sugar. This decline has continued, but in 1900-01 there were 117 factories with an outturn valued at Rs. 15,15,000; the number at work has since decreased still further, owing to the fact that the raw product is now diverted to Calcutta, where it is used for adulterating higher grade imported sugar. In spite of the decline in the manufacture, Jessore is still the chief date-sugar-producing district in Bengal, the outturn per annum being estimated at 1,221,400 cwts. out of a total of 1,559,679 cwts. for the whole Province.*

The factories are scattered over the district along the banks of the Nabagangā, the Chitrā, and the Bhairab rivers; Kotchāndpur on the Kabadak river is the principal centre of manufacture and trade. At Tāhirpur the sugar works factory was repaired in 1910 by an Indian company with the object of producing sugar without employing animal substances in the manufacture, but the work is now (1911) at a standstill.

In Jessore sugar is manufactured not from the sugarcane, as elsewhere, but from the date-palm, the cultivation of which is much cheaper. Sugarcane occupies the best land, for which a high rent has to be paid, and it occupies it throughout the whole twelve months, leaving the soil exhausted at the end. It also demands constant weeding, with irrigation and heavy manuring. The date tree, on the other hand, will grow on almost any fairly dry ground. It requires very little attention or tillage, the plantations merely being kept free from undergrowth and ploughed from time to time; and although it yields no return for the first six or seven years, it goes on giving an annual supply of juice for the next twenty-five years. A peasant can scatter a date seed here and there through his holding, and in seven years he finds himself in receipt of a steady income from the trees. When planted on a large scale, they are laid out in rows, with 12 feet between each tree, or even less; such rows form boundary lines between fields and holdings.

Tapping begins when the tree is seven years old and is carried on in the cold weather. When the rainy season is over, and Tapping.

* N. N. Banerji, *The Date Sugar Palm*, Quarterly Journal of the Bengal Agricultural Department, January 1908, pp. 161-62.

there is no more fear of rain, the lower leaves of the terminal tuft of foliage are cut off for one-half of the circumference of the trunk, leaving a bare surface measuring about 10 or 12 inches square. This surface is at first white, but with exposure turns brown, and weathers into the appearance of coarse matting. After about a week, when it is dry, tapping begins. The first thing done is to make in the exposed surface a cut in the shape of a very broad hollow V, about three inches across, and a quarter on half an inch deep. Sap exudes from the surface, and, caught by the sides of the V, runs down to the angle, where a split bamboo twig, seven or eight inches long, is inserted to catch the flowing liquor and carry it, like a spout, into an earthenware jar, which is attached by string to the trunk of the tree. This work has to be done carefully, for careless insertion of the bamboo spout may rip up the tree and cause its death.

The process of tapping is repeated every sixth evening in the following manner. On the first evening, a cut is made as above described, and the saccharine sap is allowed to run during the night; it is removed in the morning, when the heat of the sun causes fermentation, which closes the pores of the wood. The liquor thus obtained, which is the strongest and best, is called *jiran*. On the second evening a new cut is made, not nearly so deep as the first, a mere paring in fact, and for the second night the sap is allowed to run. The produce is termed *dokāt*, and is not quite so abundant or so good as *jiran*. A third paring (*tekāt*) is rarely made, but on the third night the exuding surface is merely scraped clean or rubbed to make the sap flow. The liquor collected on this night is called *jhārā* and is still less abundant and less rich than the *dokāt*; moreover, towards the end of the season, when the weather is getting hot, it is unfit for sugar manufacture and yields only coarse molasses. These three nights are the period of activity in the tree; and it is then allowed to remain at rest for three nights, when the same process is renewed. A rotation is secured by dividing the trees in a grove into six or seven groups called *pālās*. Thus, different sections are in different stages of tapping, and the owner is always busy.

As a new cut is made over the previous one every sixth day, it follows that the tree gets more and more hewed into as the season progresses; and towards its end, the exuding surface often is as much as four inches within the bark of the tree. In alternate seasons alternate sides of the tree are used for the tapping; and as each season's cutting is above that of the previous season, but on the opposite side, the stem of the tree has, if looked at from the side, a curious zigzag appearance. The age of a tree can of

course be at once ascertained by counting the notches, and adding six or seven, the number of years passed before the first tapping. Forty notches have been counted on a tree, but one rarely sees so many, and such a tree would be almost useless except as timber. The bared surface, made previous to the notching, becomes smaller and smaller as the palm advances in height and age, and is sometimes not more than four inches square. The notches are almost always on the east and west sides of the tree, as being more exposed to the sun, and very rarely on the north and south sides; also, the first notch appears to be made in by far the majority of instances on the east side.

One may expect from a good tree a regular average of five seers of saccharine sap per night, excluding the quiescent nights. The colder and clearer the weather, the more copious and rich is the produce. Foggy and cloudy nights, rain and high winds affect the sap injuriously both in quality and quantity. Tapping is begun in the early days of November. In December and January the liquor flows best, and it dwindles away as the warm days of March come. If the cultivator begins too early, or carries on too late, he will lose in quality and quantity as much as he will gain by extending the tapping season.

The next process is the boiling of the liquor, and this every cultivator does for himself, usually within the limits of the plantation. Without boiling, the sap speedily ferments and becomes useless; but once boiled, it may be kept for very long periods. It is therefore boiled at once in large pots placed on a perforated dome, beneath which a strong wood fire is kept burning, the pared leaves of the trees being used among other fuel. The liquor, which was at first brilliant and limpid, becomes a dark brown, half-viscid, half-solid mass, called *gur* (crude sugar). This, when still warm, is poured from the boiling pan into earthenware pots containing 10 to 12 seers, there to cool and solidify. Experiments made some years ago by the Agricultural Department showed that better *gur* than that obtained by the ryots could be prepared by boiling the juice in shallow iron pans, such as are used in Bihār for boiling sugarcane juice, than by boiling the date juice in deep earthen pans as is now done. The *gur* prepared in shallow pans was judged to be of an exceptionally fine quality by competent persons, and yielded sugar of better quality than the best kinds of sugar produced by the country sugar refineries by their own methods. Boiling.

A cultivator, after boiling down his juice into *gur*, does not ordinarily do more, but sells it to the refiners, who complete its manufacture into sugar. Near Keshabpur, however, a number

of peasants manufacture their own sugar and afterwards sell it to the exporters. There is also, in almost all parts of the district, a class of refiners different from those who are refiners by profession. These are the more substantial cultivators, many of whom combine commercial dealings with agriculture. They receive the *gur* from the small cultivators in their vicinity, and sometimes also purchase it in the adjacent markets; after manufacturing what they thus collect, they take their sugar to some exporting mart, and sell it to the larger merchants. These, however, are the outsiders in the sugar trade, for by far the greater quantity of the sugar is manufactured by regular refiners. Few of the latter purchase direct from the cultivators, as the small quantity which each man offers for sale would render this procedure highly inconvenient. There is consequently a class of middlemen, called *bepāris*, *pāikārs* or *dālāls*, who collect the produce from the growers, and sell it at a small profit to the refiners. They also sometimes make advances to the peasants to aid them in their cultivation, being repaid in produce; but the growers are not as a rule, dependent on such advances, and the greater number of *bepāris* simply make excursions round the country, buying up the *gur*, and bringing it in to the merchants.

On market days also, another class of *bepāris* may be seen lining the roads by which the cultivators bring in their produce. They pick up the jars of *gur* by ones or twos from the smaller cultivators, and make a profit by selling them in bulk to the refiner. The more substantial ryots sometimes bring in quantities large enough to be sold direct to refiners, but this is only done when they have a considerable amount to dispose of—one or more cart-loads—and the great bulk of the *gur* comes through the hands of intermediaries in the various methods just described. Of course the earthen jar is transferred along with the *gur* that it contains; separation is, in fact, impossible, and the refiners have to smash the jars to get out the contents. There is consequently a great trade in pottery during the whole of the sugar season, for every cultivator must buy as many new jars as he sells jars of *gur*.

Manufacture of *dhuluā* sugar.

Having traced the *gur* into the hands of the refiners, the process of manufacture remains to be described. There are several methods of refining, and two or three sorts of sugar produced. The following is the manner of manufacturing *dhuluā* sugar, a soft, moist, non-granular, powdery sugar, used very largely in the preparation of native sweetmeats. The pots of *gur* having been broken, the contents of each are carefully scraped off the broken pieces, and the *gur* is put in baskets, which hold about a maund each, and are about fifteen inches deep. The surface is beaten

down pretty level, and the baskets are placed over open pans for eight days, during which the molasses drain into the open pan beneath, leaving the more solid saccharine matter in the basket. In order to complete the refining, a layer of *siyālā*, a river weed, which grows freely in the Kabadak, is placed on the top of the sugar. After about eight days of this treatment the sugar on the surface is purified and much brighter in colour. This bleached sugar is cut away, chopped up and put out to dry and a fresh quantity of *siyālā* weeds is placed on the sugar remaining in the baskets, the process being continued till it has all been bleached. According to Sir James Westland, the effect of the weed is to keep up a continual moisture, which descending through the mass carries the liquid molasses with it, leaving the sugar comparatively white and pure. It seems more probable however that it is not the moisture from the *siyālā* that bleaches the sugar, but an acid or alkaline in the weed, as there are no other river weeds found in the Kabadak that are known to possess this quality. When dry, the sugar is a fair, lumpy, raw sugar, and weighs about 30 per cent. of the original mass, the rest of the *gur* having passed off in molasses. It is known as *dhuluā* sugar from the fact that it is produced in clods, which have to be chopped up, beaten and reduced to powder.

By diminishing the period of exposure under *siyālā* weeds to five or six days instead of eight, a less refined sugar is prepared. Its inferiority is shown by its deeper colour, but that is in a measure remedied by pounding it into a fine powder. This coarse sugar is often adulterated with earth or sand, and it has been observed that the floors of the refineries are sometimes a foot or more beneath the level of the ground outside, the difference representing the amount of dust which has been swept up with the sugar when it is collected after drying.

The first "droppings" of molasses, which ooze out from the baskets in the manner described, are rich in sugar, and are used, especially in the United Provinces, to sweeten articles of food. It entirely depends upon the price offered, whether they are sold at once or reserved for another process of sugar manufacture. In the latter case they are boiled, to prevent fermentation, and placed in large earthenware jars to cool. On cooling, they form into a mass somewhat like *gur*, but not so rich. After this, sugar is obtained by draining and the *siyālā* treatment as already described, but it is coarser and darker in colour than the kind first described. If the refiner is not very honest, and if he is sure of finding immediate sale, he employs a much more speedy process. Taking the cooled *gur*, he squeezes out the molasses by compressing it in a bag and then, drying and breaking up the

The droppings.

residuum, he sells it as sugar. It does not look very different from that prepared in the more elaborate way, but soon ferments—whence the necessity of finding an immediate purchaser. The last droppings are also boiled and thus become molasses, which are shipped to the Eastern Bengal markets of Nārâyanganj, Jhālakāti, Nalchiti and Bhāwāl. These molasses are known as *chitā gur* and are used for sweetening tobacco and making country rum. The yield of one maund of *gur* is reported to be 15 seers of sugar and 22 seers of molasses, which leaves 3 seers to be accounted for. This loss of 3 seers in the maund is known as *jalti* and is the reduction of weight resulting from the different boilings.

Manufacture of crystalline sugar.

The ordinary soft or *dhuluā* sugar can never be clean, because, from the processes employed, whatever impurity there may be in the original crude mass must always appear in the finished article. Another objection to it is that it liquifies readily and cannot be kept for any considerable time. Crystalline or *pākā* sugar does not suffer from these disadvantages and is manufactured in the following manner.

The *gur* is first cast upon platforms to allow the molasses to run out, and as much as then flows off is collected as first droppings. It is next put in gunny bags and squeezed to separate the molasses further. The sugar which remains behind is boiled with water in large open pans, and as it boils, all scum is taken off. It is then strained and boiled a second time, and left to cool in flat basins. When cooled, it is already sugar of a rough sort, and *siyālā* leaves are put over it, and it is left to drain. The result is a good white sugar known as *pākā* or *sāchhi* (true sugar). Should any remain at the bottom of the vessel still unrefined, it is again treated with *siyālā* leaves. The first droppings and the droppings under the leaves are collected and squeezed again in the bags; from the sugar left behind a second small quantity of refined sugar is prepared in exactly the same way, *i.e.*, by two boilings. The final droppings, which are known as *chitā gur*, are not used for further sugar manufacture. About 30 per cent. of the original weight of the *gur* is turned out in the form of pure crystalline sugar.

There is another method of manufacture peculiar to Keshabpur, and slightly differing from that just described. The *gur* is first boiled in large open pots, and into each potful is put a handful of *bichh* or burnt molasses; it is then left to cool. As it cools, it begins to crystallize, after which it is treated with *siyālā* leaf, and thus refined. The droppings are again treated in the same manner. The last droppings are burnt; they form

the *bichh* used in manufacture, the effect of which is apparently to make one boiling do instead of two. The produce in sugar is 25 or 30 per cent. of the weight of the original *gur*.

The English process of manufacture, in use in factories at Kotchāndpur and Chaugāchhā, is as follows. The raw material is mixed with a certain amount of water and boiled in open cisterns, the boiling being accomplished, not by fire, but by the introduction of steam. The lighter impurities float to the surface and are skimmed off, after which the boiling solution is made to flow away through blanket strainers into another cistern. It only remains to drive off the water and desiccate the sugar by heat. If this is effected by raising the whole to boiling temperature, the result would be sugar, granular indeed in construction, but not differing in this respect from native crystallized sugar. But if the water be driven off without raising it to boiling point, the crisp and sparkling appearance of loaf sugar is always obtained. This object is attained by boiling in a vacuum pan, that is to say, a large closed cistern, from which a powerful pump-exhaust has partially exhausted the air. The lower the atmospheric pressure on the surface of the liquid, the lower the temperature at which ebullition takes place. The pump is therefore regulated so as to diminish the pressure to such a point that the liquid boils at about 160° Fahrenheit. The apparatus being kept regulated to this point, all the water is driven off by boiling, by means of introduced steam, without the temperature becoming higher than 160°. It is unnecessary here to describe the mechanical devices for emptying, watching and testing the liquid within the closed cistern, or for regulating the supply of heat and the action of the pump, which is driven by steam. It is sufficient to pass at once to the end of the vacuum pan stage, which lasts eight hours, after which the mass in the pan, which is in a viscid state, is run off into sugar-loaf moulds. It is then left to cool in the moulds, which are placed, upside down, above a pot. The molasses by its own weight drops out through a hole in the vertex and is caught in the earthenware pot beneath.

The last of the molasses is washed out in the following way. The uppermost inch of the sugar in the mould is scraped off, moistened, and put back. The moisture sinks through the mass, and with it the molasses. This is done thrice, the sugar remaining twelve days in the moulds, and then the purification is considered to be finished, and the loaves may be turned out of the moulds. If the raw material used is the *gur* as it comes from the cultivator, the result is a yellowish, sparkling loaf-sugar; but if native

refined *dhuluā* sugar is used, the loaf is a brilliantly white sugar.

Sugar marts and refineries.

The following description of the sugar marts and refineries is quoted from Sir James Westland's Report. "There can be few busier scenes than such places as Kotchāndpur or Keshabpur display during the sugar season. For four or five months the produce is every day seen pouring in from every direction. At Kotchāndpur alone, two or three thousand maunds is the daily supply of *gur*, and at Keshabpur probably about one thousand. Carts laden with jars, cultivators bringing in their own *gur*, fill the streets; the shops of the *bepāris* are crowded with sellers, and the business of weighing and receiving goes on without intermission. Larger transactions are going on at the doors of the refineries, where carts fully laden stand to deliver their cargoes to the refiner. At Kotchāndpur this occurs every day, more or less, though on the regular market days there is more business done than on others. At Keshabpur also there is a daily market, but at the other places the supplies are mostly timed so as to reach on the market day.

"Let us enter a refinery,—a large open square, shut in with a fence, and having sheds on one or two sides of it, where part of the work, and specially the storing, is done. If it is a refinery of *pākā* sugar, we find several furnaces within the yard, and men busy at each, keeping up the fire, or skimming the pots, or preparing them. If it is *dhuluā* sugar, we see many rows of baskets, with the sugar, covered with *siyālā* leaf, standing to drop; rows of earthen pots, with *gur*, or sugar, or molasses, according to the stage of manufacture, are seen on all sides; and in the same open yard all the different processes are at the same time going on.

"The manufacturing season extends from the middle of December to the middle of May. In December the merchants and the refiners all congregate at the sugar towns, and in May they finish their work and go home. Compared with their state during these five months, the appearance of such places at Kotchāndpur and Keshabpur during the rest of the year is almost that of a deserted town. The refineries are shut up; no *gur* is coming in; nothing going on."

Profits of cultivation and manufacture.

As regards the profits of cultivation and manufacture, Sir James Westland makes the following estimate. Assuming $4\frac{1}{2}$ months as the duration of the tapping season or about 67 productive nights, and 5 seers as the yield of one night, the outturn of one tree would be 335 seers of liquor, which would give about 40 seers or one maund of *gur*, at the rate of Rs. 2 to Rs. 2-4 a maund. A plantation with an area of one *bighā* containing a

hundred trees will therefore produce Rs. 200 to Rs. 225 worth of *gur*, if all the trees are in good bearing. As it takes from 7 to 10 seers of liquor to produce one seer of *gur* or crude sugar, the amount of produce which one good tree can yield in a season can be easily estimated. According to another estimate,* however, the average number of sap-yielding days is only 50, so that the outturn per tree would be 250 seers, and the profit would therefore be less. This latter estimate is supported by a note contributed by the Collector stating that the ordinary computation of the profits derived from a date-tree plantation in this district has hitherto been eight annas per tree per annum clear profit. One *bighā* of land will hold 100 date trees, and the net profit, if they are all in good bearing, is generally reckoned at Rs. 50 per annum.

The cultivator's expenses in making *gur* are considerable. In addition to the ground rent, he has to pay the wages of the labourers who prepare the trees for tapping and then tap them. These labourers are engaged for the season at fixed rates, which are mentioned later. Then, the cultivator has to procure fuel to boil down his date juice, and fuel is more difficult to procure now than it was formerly; in fact, the cultivator has to buy most of the fuel he wants. The price of the *gur* pots is another big item in the list of expenses. For every pot of *gur* he prepares, the cultivator has to get a new pot, which is broken up at the sugar factories to which his *gur* is sold and is subsequently converted into road metal. He wants at least one pot for each date tree in bearing in his plantation. It has also to be remembered that for the first seven years the date tree is not productive. The average life of a date tree is about 25 years, so that the profits of 25 years must be divided by 32 to represent the profit of each year.

The following estimate of the profits of cultivation is contributed by a former Collector. "Sir James Westland's calculation that one maund of *gur* is the yearly yield of a good tree appears to be much too high, especially for an average yield. From enquiries made it would appear that the yield is about 15 to 20 seers of *gur* per tree. Taking a one-*bighā* field containing 100 trees, it would follow that the cultivator gets 50 maunds of *gur*, for which he gets Rs. 75 at the rate of Re. 1-8 per maund. His expenses are ground rent (unless the plantation be one he has himself made), Rs. 5; price of 300 *gur* and date-juice pots Rs. 9-6; price of four large pots for boiling juice, Re. 1; fuel, Rs. 8;

* N. N. Banerji, *The Date Sugar Palm*, Quarterly Journal of the Bengal Agricultural Department, January 1908.

wages of labour for cutting the same, Rs. 4; *gāchhi* for shaving the trees, Rs. 2-4; *gāchhi* for tapping them, Rs. 10; a servant to boil the date juice (wages for 4 months) Rs. 8; cart-hire for bringing 50 maunds of *gur* to market, Rs. 5; cultivation of the land (ploughing), Re. 1-8; setting of the *gāch kātā dāos* (a yearly charge) annas 8; in all, Rs. 54-10. If the cultivator gets as much as 20 seers of *gur* per tree he makes a net profit of Rs. 20. But if the yield per tree is less, say 15 seers of *gur* per tree, he gets only 37½ maunds of, *gur* from his one-*bighā* plantation, which he sells for Rs. 56-6 while his expenses remain practically the same.

"Another calculation as to the cultivator's profits reaches me from Kotchāndpur. My informant, who is the leading authority on the sugar question in Kotchāndpur, writes:—'Two hundred trees on 2 *bighās* of land produce 50 maunds of *gur* which at Rs. 2 per maund yield Rs. 100. The expenses are *gāchi* labourers, Rs. 24; *kheri* labourers, Rs. 15; perquisites of above (food, etc.), Rs. 38-4; knives (*dāos*), Re. 1; pots, Rs. 5-5: rope, Re. 1; fuel, Rs. 15; rent, Rs. 4; in all Rs. 103-9, which works out at a loss to the cultivator.' Further, my correspondent admits that the average price of *gur* this year (1902) is Rs. 1-13 and not Rs. 2, and this price of Re. 1-13 is what is paid to the *pāikar*. The cultivator parts with his *gur* for considerably less. My correspondent adds that where a cultivator works himself and also has the assistance of his relatives, *gur* pays, but not otherwise. It is clear, however, that if relatives assist, they take a share of the profits. Further, the labour contributed by the cultivator himself is as much an expense, to be debited against profits arising from the price of *gur*, as if outside labour were employed and paid for."

As regards the profits of the refiners, the Collector wrote in 1902:—"At present, Kotchāndpur unrefined sugar sells at about Rs. 4 a maund, kutcha weight, that sum representing a rough average between the prices of *ākra* sugar (No. I) at Rs. 4-6 and *kunda* sugar (No. II) at Rs. 3-12 to Rs. 4. Molasses sells at Re. 1-1 a maund, kutcha weight, while *gur* is bought by the sugar manufacturers at Kotchāndpur at Re. 1-13 per maund, kutcha weight. As one maund of *gur* produces about 15 seers of sugar and 22 seers of molasses, a simple calculation shows that the sugar manufacturer makes a gross profit of annas 4-6 on every maund of *gur* he buys. How much of the gross profit is swallowed up in manufacturing the sugar, I have no means of determining, but there can be no doubt that after deducting the working expenses of a sugar factory which must be considerable, the margin

of profit left to the sugar manufacturer can only be very small."

A company, with Indian gentlemen as share-holders and directors, has recently (in 1909) been formed, and a factory opened at Jessore, for the manufacture of combs, buttons and mats, under the supervision of an Indian expert trained in Japan. The hand-loom weaving industry is still of some importance especially in Sidhipārā and Nauhātā, there being a considerable manufacture both of course and fine cotton cloths, and also of mosquito curtains; in parts of the district the Serampore pattern of hand-loom has been adopted. Mats and baskets are made by Muchis and Doms and have a good local sale, Jessore being one of the few districts where there is some centralized mat-making Cart-wheels are extensively made, those prepared in the Jhenida subdivision being exported in boats and sold at the market of Bāduriā north of Basirhāt in the 24-Parganas. Lime for white-washing and eating with *pān* is prepared from shells found in the marshes. They are gathered by Buna and Bāgdi women and sold to Baitīs, who burn them in miniature kilns and convert them into lime. Pottery of various shapes is manufactured in the district; the vessels are used for domestic purposes, and for boiling date juice before its conversion into sugar. It is not all kinds of pottery which will bear the continuous hard firing required for boiling down the juice, and some potters have obtained a special reputation for the excellence of their wares in this respect. The whole of the country about Chaugāchhā and Kotchāndpur is supplied principally from one village, Bāghdāngā, a little west of Jessore, where the clay seems to be of unusually good quality. Native goldsmiths make gold and silver ornaments of a common type, ironsmiths prepare the ordinary *dāos*, knives, etc., and brass-ware of an ordinary character is produced by the local braziers, These articles, as well as the country shoes prepared by Muchis, are sold at local markets and bazars. Cutlery of a superior quality is produced at Bhawakhāli near Jessore, good specimens of which were exhibited at the Jessore Industrial Exhibition of 1909.

Other industries

A number of braziers live at Mulgrām, 2 miles north-west of Keshabpur, and at the adjoining village of Jagannāthpur. Their manner of trade is thus described by Sir James Westland:— "At the beginning of the cold weather they go out with their wares—all sorts of brass vessels. Many of them wander over the eastern parts of the district, and over Backergunge, travelling in their boats, which are filled with their goods; a few go landwards,

taking their wares in carts. They sell them as occasion offers, partly for money, partly for old brass; and after they have, for four months or so, gone about hawking their goods, they come back to their homes The old brass which they have obtained, they hand over to the *golāndārs* or brass-founders, who work it up at the rate of about Rs 10 per maund, and thus prepare a stock, which the *kānsāris* go out to sell next cold weather." At Lohāgarā in the Narāil subdivision some immigrants from the United Provinces have set up the manufacture of bracelets, made of lac brought from Calcutta. At Tāhirpur tobacco curing was started by Mr. McLeod of Kotchāndpur, but was given up in 1907.

Indigo Industry.

Among the extinct manfactures of the district special mention should be made of the indigo industry, on account of the important part it has played in the economic history of the district. A sketch has already been given in Chapter II of its early history and of the indigo riots of 1860. There were then a number of flourishing concerns scattered over the district, but the riots caused a considerable diminution of the area under cultivation and the industry gradually declined. In 1895-96 there were still 17 factories, the produce of which was returned at 1,416 maunds, valued at 3½ lakhs; but shortly after this the low price obtained for the natural product and the competition of the artificial dye dealt a fatal blow to the industry. There are now only two factories, which are in a moribund conditicn, and the chief memorial of the industry consists of the ruins or sites of old factories dotted over the district, especially in the east of the Narāil and Māgurā sudivisions. The following account of the industry has been prepared from a note contributed by the Collector.

The factories.

In 1890 there were three large concerns under European management:—(1) The Sindhuri concern, with its headquarters factory at Sindhuri on the Nabaganga on the western border of the Jhenida subdivision, which had subordinate factories at Kātlāmāri, Durgāpur, Bijulia, Bistudia, Karagoda, Ailhans and other places. (2) The Joradah concern, with its headquarters factory at Joradah on the Kumār river, and dependent factories at Dhulia, Bhabitpur, Alladikhali, Barada, etc. (3) The Purahāti-Hazrapur concern, with headquarters factories at Purahāti and Hazrapur, both on the Nabagangā, which had subordinate factories at Phallia, Nārāyanpur, Pabahāti, etc. There was also an indigo concern belonging to one of the co-sharers of the Narāil family, which had factories on the Kumār river in the Māgurā subdivision.

Of these concerns the Sindhuri concern was by far the largest and most important, its factories in a good year being able to send over 1,000 maunds of indigo to the Calcutta market. Joradah in a good year could produce about 600 maunds, and the two divisions of the Purahāti-Hazrapur concerns about 400 maunds. At that time the prices obtained for the indigo of Jessore ranged from about Rs. 280 to Rs. 300 per maund for good indigo, and from Rs. 150 to Rs. 180 for inferior qualities. With such prices the planters were able to assure themselves of a steady profit in spite of the loss caused by steadily recurring lean years. But with the advent of chemical indigo into the market the price of the natural dye began to fall, and it became obvious to those interested in the industry that a point would soon be reached when it would not be profitable any longer to grow indigo. Had labour become cheaper as the price of indigo fell, it would have been possible to continue the industry for some years longer; but in this district, as elsewhere, owing to an increased demand for labour in other places easily accessible by railway, and also owing to a rise in the price of food stuffs, both skilled and unskilled labour were able to command higher wages.

The downfall of the industry was hastened by two other causes, (1) the increasing demand for land, and (2) the unpopularity of the indigo crop among the cultivators themselves. To explain intelligibly how these two causes operated to secure the extinction of an once flourishing industry, it will be necessary to touch briefly on the zamīndāri system of the indigo concerns in this district. An indigo concern represented by its manager was, to all intents and purposes, a zamīndār of the lands belonging to the concern, and, in common with most zamīndārs, did not hold all its estates under the same right and title. As regards some of its estates, it was in the position of a superior landlord paying revenue direct to Government; as regards other estates it occupied the subordinate position of a lessee or farmer of rents for a term of years. When these leases or *ijārās* expired, a difficulty was often felt in their renewal. The lessor frequently wanted an enhanced rent, which the lessee was unable or unwilling to pay. The friction, which arose between the superior landlord and the subordinate concern, if not removed by the more peaceful method of arbitration, not infrequently resulted in a crop of cases in the courts. Litigation, even under the most favourable circumstances, being an expensive luxury, there can be little doubt that an indigo concern which required the dubious aid of a series of contested cases in the courts to obtain

the renewal of a lease for a term of years was frequently buying its property in a dear market. Even when a lease was renewed in an amicable manner, a higher rent was generally stipulated for and agreed to in consequence of the rise in the value of land during the past 30 or 40 years. It is therefore clear that in later years the increasing dearness of land coupled with the expenses of litigation must have seriously diminished the profits of indigo concerns.

When indigo concerns first acquired landed property in this district for the purpose of growing indigo, an arrangement was always made with the cultivators of the soil, generally through the headman of the village, that a certain proportion of the arable lands of the *mauza* was to be set apart for the cultivation of indigo. At the beginning of the season, *i.e.*, in the month of October, the planter in whose jurisdiction a particular village lay pointed out the lands which were to be reserved for indigo during the coming year. This arrangement was not, as a rule, objected to by the cultivator, as lands suitable for indigo were generally not very suitable for paddy, and further the rotation of the two crops benefited both. The lands to be reserved for indigo having been parcelled out, the ryot was given the indigo seed, which he sowed. He did nothing else to the crop until it was ready for the sickle, when he cut his "bundles" and brought them to the factory. He was paid for the indigo brought by the 'bundle" and received 6 annas per bundle. An average good field would produce about 6 "bundles" of indigo per *bighā*, so that the ryot received Rs. 2-4 per *bighā* for his indigo. This sum of Rs. 2-4 was probably a fair price for the produce of one *bighā* of land in the first half of the 19th century, but at the close of it was ridiculously low, for the same average good field which brought the ryot a gross profit of Rs. 2-4 would, if sown in paddy, have brought him a gross profit of Rs. 16 to Rs. 20. The ryot therefore took no interest in the cultivation of his indigo. Cattle were allowed to eat it, weeds to choke it, and if the factory had not employed special men (*tāgadgīrs*) to overlook the growing plant, very little of it would have ultimately found its way to the steeping vats. The ryot did not care very much if he cut only four bundles instead of six, as the price of the bundle was so inconsiderable. In brief, the planter did not make it worth the ryots' while to grow indigo, and it is significant that when the planters gave up indigo, not a word of protest was raised by the cultivators themselves: As a matter of fact, the disappearance of indigo gave them more lands for paddy and other profitable crops, and was hailed with delight.

Regarding the extinction of the industry a former Collector writes: "The disappearance of the indigo concerns of the district has been, on the whole, a distinct loss to the people of Jessore. The planter was a friend to his ryots in many ways. The indigo factory was a court where petty cases were cheaply and fairly decided; the indigo planter was a banker from whom the ryots got advances in bad seasons on very easy terms. The factory used its influence to settle disputes between the ryots and protected them in various ways. The Bhawānīpur Khāl, which was re-excavated some years ago in the Jhenida subdivision, and is admittedly a boon to the hundreds of villages on or near it, was re-excavated chiefly through the personal exertions of the manager of the Sindhuri concern. Schools and dispensaries have grown up round indigo factories and have been supported by the factories chiefly. If the village roads in the Jhenida subdivision are in good condition, it is due to the planters who made and maintained them. In a word, the planters of the district identified themselves, to a great extent, with the interests of their tenantry, and this should be noted and placed to their credit before they are entirely forgotten."

TRADE.

The principal imports are rice, and *sundri* (*Heritiera litoralis*) wood from Backergunge and the Sundarbans, cotton piece-goods, cotton twist, salt, kerosene oil, flour and potatoes from Calcutta, and coal from Burdwān. The principal exports are paddy, pulses, jute, linseed, tamarind, cocoa-nuts, unrefined sugar, oil-cake, hides, earthen jars, cart-wheels, bamboos, bones, betel-nuts, timber, *ghī* and fish, which are exported chiefly to Backergunge and Calcutta. Most of the sugar produced at Kotchāndpur goes to the Calcutta market to supply the requirements of native sweetmeat vendors; while the chief market for its molasses is Nārāyanganj. Some of its sugar also goes to Nalchiti and Jhālakāti in the Backergunge district, and the remainder is scattered over the numerous bazars of the Jessore, Nadiā and Murshidābād districts. Almost all the *dhuluā* sugar produced at other places finds its way to Nalchiti and Jhālakāti. Except in the Jhenida subdivision, where there is a large amount of cart traffic, most of the trade is carried by boats and is in the hand of Sāhā and Teli dealers, but considerable quantities of jute and bamboos are sent by rail to Calcutta. Kotchāndpur is the largest, and Keshabpur the second largest centre of trade; Naldāngā, Chaugāchhā, Māgurā, Jhenida, Chāndkhāli, Khajurā, and Binodpur are important trading villages.

CHAPTER IX.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

EARLY COMMUNICATIONS. TRADITION relates that the first road in the district was made along the bank of the Bhairab by Khānja Alī and his followers as they marched southwards to the Sundarbans in the fifteenth century. Traces of this road are still found in places raised upon a fairly high embankment. This road is not entered in the earliest map showing roads in Bengal, viz., that of Valentijn (published in 1726, but based on data collected by Van den Broucke in 1658-64), according to which the district was served by two roads, one lying within the limits of Jessore and the other outside it. The former started in Burdwān and passing through Hooghly and Jessore, stretched across Farīdpur to the Dacca district. The latter road was an important route to the north running along the right bank of the Padmā from Suti to Fathābād (Farīdpur) and thence to Dacca. At the end of the eighteenth century the district remained almost as destitute of roads as two centuries before, presumably because the rivers furnished the most convenient means of transit. At this time the public road from Calcutta to Dacca passed through Jessore; but it appears to have been rather a track kept up for country traffic than a regularly maintained road. Besides this road, there were, in 1795, roads from Jessore *viâ* Jhenida to Kumārkhāli and from Chaugāchhā to Khulnā. In 1802 only 20 miles of road, properly so called, existed in the district, and none of the considerable rivers were bridged.

In the first half of the 19th century several bridges were built by Kālī Prasād Rai, better known as Kālī Poddār, who lived near Jessore, and, having amassed much wealth, resolved in his old age to spend it for the public benefit and on pious uses. His idea was to construct a route from Jessore to the Ganges by means of a completely bridged road. He accordingly built bridges over the Daitalā khāl at Daitalā, five miles east of Jessore, and over the Bhairab at Nīlganj 1½ miles east of Jessore on the Dacca road, both of which remain in use to the present day. He also bridged the two or three streams which lie between the Kabadak and

Ichhāmatī rivers, *i.e.*, between Jhingergāchhā and Bangāon; these latter bridges have since been replaced by more substantial structures built by Government. He further constructed several roads, of which the most important was that from Bangāon to Chāgdaha, which was planted with trees on both sides.*

In 1848 he assigned a landed estate yielding an income of Rs. 301 per annum for the repair of his works, with a sum of Rs. 9,000 to build a bridge over the Kabadak near Jhingergāchhā, and Rs. 18,000 for one over the Ichhāmatī near Bangāon. With the first Rs. 9,000, to which it added an equal sum, the Government in 1846 erected a chain bridge at Jhingergāchhā. The Military Board, which had the management of such works, came up about April 1846 to test the new bridge; they spent more than Rs. 2,500 in this testing and pronounced it safe. On September 30th of the same year, when the festival of the Durgā Puja was held, people flocked into Jhingergāchhā to see the image being thrown into the river, and the bridge was crowded with people. All of a sudden, the chains gave way, the bridge fell down bodily, and many people were drowned, both among those on the bridge and those who were in boats beneath it. It cost Rs. 9,000 or Rs. 10,000 more to raise the bridge and replace it in position. Many years passed before anything was done with the remaining Rs. 18,000 given for the bridge at Bangāon; but finally, about 1864-65, with this sum and about as much more given by Government, a bridge-of-boats was erected, and the only breach in the road between Jessore and the Ganges was filled up.†

RAILWAYS.

The south of the district is traversed by the central section of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, which enters Jessore from the 24-Parganas a little to the north of the Gobardāngā station. Thence it goes north to Bangāon and north-east to Jessore, after which it strikes south-east into the Khulnā district. The marginal table shows the stations lying within this district and their distances from Calcutta (Sealdah). The line, which is on the standard (5 feet 6 inches) gauge, was opened in 1884 by the Bengal Central Railway, but has been worked by the Eastern Bengal State Railway since 1st July 1905, the date of the termination of

Station.	*Miles.*
Chāndpārā	42
Bangāon	48
Benāpol	53
Nabharan	59
Jhingergāchhā Ghāt ...	67
Jhingergāchhā ...	68
Jessore	75
Rupdia	80
Singia	84
Nawapārā	91

* *The Banks of the Bhagirathi*, Calcutta Review (1846), Vol. VI, p. 412.

† J. Westland, *Report on the District of Jessore*, pp. 194-95.

the contract between the Secretary of State for India and the private company which used to work it. It is connected with the eastern section (main line) of the Eastern Bengal State Railway by a branch from Bangāon to Rānaghāt. On this branch there is only one station within the limits of Jessore, viz., Gopālnagar, six miles from Bangāon. There is no other railway line in the district, but the eastern section of the Eastern Bengal State Railway runs almost parallel to the western boundary throughout this length, and at no great distance from it, and serves Jessore by means of several feeder roads leading from its stations.

Light railways. A light railway from Jessore to Jhenida, with a branch from Kālīganj to Kotchāndpur, a distance of 37 miles, is now under construction. This line, when complete, will open up some considerable trade markets.

ROADS. Excluding the roads in municipal areas, the district contains over 1,000 miles of road, of which, however, 451 miles are classed as village roads, *i.e.*, they are practically only cart tracks. The Sadar, Jhenida and Bangāon subdivisions, where the land is higher than elsewhere, are best provided with roads, while there are comparatively few in the Māgurā and Narāil subdivisions. The reason for this is that the two latter subdivisions formerly depended on their waterways for the transport of goods and passengers, and it is only since the deterioration of the rivers that the necessity for roads has been felt. The following is a brief account of the principal roads.

Provincial roads. The only provincial road in the district is the Jessore-Calcutta road, which is a Government road maintained by the District Board. Altogether 42 miles of this road lie in the district, of which until recently only 32 miles (from Jessore to Bangāon) were metalled; the work of metalling the remaining ten miles up to Kalasima on the boundary of the district was taken up two years ago, and only four miles remain unmetalled. The road is bridged throughout and has two pontoon boat bridges, one at Bangāon over the Ichhāmatī river, which is here ordinarily 273 feet wide, and the other at Gaighātā over the Jamunā river, which is 126 feet wide. Only half a century ago this road used to be the most important route in the district, for it was the highway used by people travelling to Dacca and Assam. After the opening of the Eastern Bengal State Railway in 1862, the portion south of Bangāon began to be less used, as traffic with the interior began to be effected by rail from Chāgdaha station. Since 1884, when the Bengal Central Railway was opened, traffic has greatly decreased, and the road is now mainly used as a feeder to the railway.

The District Board maintains 128 miles of metalled roads and 461 miles of unmetalled roads, besides a number of village roads with an aggregate length of 451 miles. The following is a list of the most important District Board roads, which may be divided into two classes, viz., the roads radiating from Jessore and the other subdivisional head-quarters and the railway feeder roads. In the former class may be grouped (1) the road from Jessore to Jhenida *viâ* Kālīganj, 28 miles long. It is metalled throughout and has inspection bungalows at Kālīganj on the 19th mile and at Jhenida. (2) Jessore to Keshabpur *viâ* Rājhāt 5 miles from Jessore, and Manirāmpur, 18 miles from Jessore. It is 21 miles long, and is metalled throughout. There are inspection bungalows on this road at Manirāmpur and at Keshabpur. (3) Jessore to Afra, 12 miles, all metalled. (4) Jhenida to Māgurā, 17 miles, of which 3 miles only are metalled. (5) The road to Khulnā *viâ* Singia and Tāltalā on the border of the district. It is metalled as far as Singia, and the remaining 10 miles are unmetalled. The second class includes the following roads proceeding from north to south:—(1) Jhenida to Boraī (12½ miles), and thence to Chuādāngā railway station. (2) Kālīganj to Kotchāndpur (10 miles), and thence to Hansada (9½ miles) and to the Kishanganj railway station. (3) Bangāon to Baliaī (10½ miles), and thence to Chāgdaha railway station. District Board roads.

The rivers are in many cases no longer navigable in their upper reaches except during the rains; but lower down they are tidal and carry large boats and steamers throughout the year. Steamer services ply (1) from Khulnā up the Athārabānki and Madhumat as far as Muhammadpur; (2) from Khulnā by Kāliā to Lohāgarā; and by the Majudkhāli, Chītrā, Ghorākhāli Khāl and Nabagangā to Binodpur throughout the year, and during the rains as far as Māgurā; and (3) from Kapilmuni up the Kabadak to Jhingergāchhā, feeding the railway at the place last named: the steamer service between Kapilmuni and Jhingergāchhā was started by the Bangya River Steam Navigation Company in 1901. During the rains large boats, ranging up to 2,000 maunds, carry jute to the stations on the railway, while some go direct to Calcutta. Large passenger boats also ply on the Nabagangā and Chītrā rivers and the channels connecting them with the railway stations. WATER COMMUNICATIONS.

The only canal in the district is the Hallifax Canal, a mile in length, which connects the Madhumatī and Nabagangā rivers in the Narāil subdivision. The cross channels connecting these rivers having silted up to the detriment of traffic, the District Board, in 1901, excavated the Tonā Khāl at a cost of Rs. 17,000. The Hallifax Canal.

The canal thus formed was at first known by that name, but in 1902 was called the Hallifax Canal after Mr. A. G. Hallifax, I.C.S., the then District Magistrate. This canal has greatly improved the river communications of Jessore to the advantage of its merchants and traders, for it has let in water from the Madhumatī to the stagnant bed of the Bankarnāli, and has facilitated traffic with the eastern districts. It has also proved of benefit to the District Board, for tolls are levied on boats using the canal at the rate of one anna per 100 maunds, and the lease of these tolls brings in about Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000 per annum.

POSTAL DEPARTMENT. The returns for 1908-09 show that there are 136 post offices and 614 miles of postal communication. The number of postal articles delivered in the same year, including letters, post cards, packets, newspapers and parcels, was 3,625,284. The value of money orders issued was Rs. 15,02,351 and of those paid Rs. 16,51,740 ; while the number of Savings Bank deposits was 12,138, the amount deposited being Rs. 9,55,911. Postal-telegraph offices have been opened at Jessore, Bangāon, Jhenida, Kotchāndpur, Lakshmīpāsā, Māgurā, Naldāngā and Narāil.

CHAPTER X.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

REVENUE HISTORY.

WHEN the *Dīwāni* of Bengal was conferred upon the East India Company in 1765, it was not at first considered advisable to entrust the immediate administration of land revenue to European officers, who had had no experience of its intricacies. But in 1769 European Supervisors were appointed by Verelst with powers of supervision over the native officers employed in collecting the revenue and administering justice in different parts of the country; and in 1770 Councils, with superior authority, were established at Murshidābād and Patna. The Supervisors were instructed to obtain full information regarding the produce and capacity of the land, to give details not only of the revenue, but also of the cesses or other demands made from the cultivators, and to report on the regulation of commerce and the administration of justice. The information elicited by these enquiries showed that the internal government was in a state of disorder, and that the people were suffering great oppression. Nevertheless, seven years elapsed from the acquisition of the *Dīwāni* before the Government deemed itself competent to remedy these defects. It was not till 1772 that the Court of Directors resolved to "stand forth as *Dīwān*, and by the agency of the Company's servants to take upon themselves the entire care and management of the revenue." A Board of Revenue was accordingly appointed at Calcutta, the Supervisors were given the designation of Collectors, and a native officer styled *Dīwān*, who was chosen by the Board, was associated with each Collector in the control of revenue affairs. The European officers were recalled, however, in 1774, and native agents (*āmils*) appointed in their stead. It was not till 1786 that a European Collector was again appointed for each district, the first in Jessore being Mr. Henckell, who was vested with the united powers of Collector, Civil Judge and Magistrate.

The district, in common with other districts of Bengal, was ettled in the year 1772 for a term of five years, on the expiry of which yearly settlements were made with the zamīndārs till the

Decennial Settlement of 1790. When the settlement of 1772 was made, it was based on the enquiries made by an officer named Mr. Lane, whom the Committee of Revenue had deputed to make an estimate of the zamīndārs' assets. No further enquiry was made, and when the task of making the yearly settlements devolved upon the Collector, he had few settled principles and little detailed information on which to proceed. He therefore made a rough estimate, and got the zamīndār to undertake to pay as much as he could be made to consent to. If no amicable settlement could be arrived at, the zamīndār was temporarily ousted, and the Collector tried by direct collections to realize the estimated revenue. The same course was adopted in case of arrears, and the defaulting zamīndār was also liable to be put into jail, the sale of estates for arrears being apparently an expedient which had not been thought of at the time. In one case at least the authorities followed the old Mughal plan, when the zamīndārs of the Sultānpur estate (now in Khulnā) defaulted in payment of the demand. They were dispossessed, and the estate was transferred to one Kāsi Nāth Datta on his paying up the arrears and engaging to pay the revenue accruing in future.

The annual settlements of land revenue, based on such imperfect data, resulted in an increased assessment every year and operated very harshly upon the zamīndārs. Many were plunged in debt, and their embarrassment reacted on their tenants, from whom they squeezed as much as they could. Mr. Henckell reported that it was almost impossible to obtain from the zamīndārs more revenue than they were actually paying, and his successor, Mr. Rocke, based his calculations for the Permanent Settlement on those of 1772 on the express ground that there had been little or no progress since that time. The zamīndārs, he said, were then assessed to their utmost, and had so little to spare for themselves that they eked out their revenue by exactions from their ryots. The oppression of the ryots naturally caused loss to their estates, so much so, that in 1790 the Collector stated it as a well-known fact that "cultivation everywhere in every district had decreased since 1772, and there was a difficulty then which there was not before in collecting the rents from the ryots."

"The zamīndārs", writes Sir James Westland, "uncertain of to-morrow, and having little enough for to-day, fell back on the ryots and determined to get the utmost out of them; they were pinched in their turn, and progress of any sort was rendered impossible. No ryot would improve his land or extend his

cultivation when he knew that the zamīndār would at once demand all the advantage that might accrue; and no zamīndār would attempt improvement of his estate when he knew the certain result would be an increased demand, and an indeterminately increased demand, on the part of the Collector. The mutual distrust between Government, zamīndār and ryot—the natural consequence of an annual settlement system, especially where no principles were laid down as a basis to work upon—barred all progress, and remedy was loudly called for."

As an example of the results of these early experiments in land revenue administration, the case of the Muhammadshāhi (Mahmūdshāhi) zamīndāri may be cited. This estate was settled in 1772 upon the basis of Mr. Lane's enquiry, and at the same time was divided into two shares of four-fifths and one-fifths respectively. Shortly after this, the proprietor of the four-fifth share being considered incapable of undertaking the settlement, his estate was given in farm to one Prān Bose, who held it in his own name or that of his son from 1779 to 1784. The estate had already been assessed at the highest possible figure; it was liable to continual inundation; and the zamīndār had granted await half of its entire area either rent-free or on quit-rents, so that it could not pay the revenue assessed upon it by Government. Prān Bose had, however, undertaken the farm with the intention of making it pay, and a system of oppression and exaction followed. The ryots were made to pay numberless cesses and imposts, and were so impoverished that they gave up extending cultivation and sometimes fled altogether. The *tālukdārs* too were ordered to pay an enhanced rent and turned out of possession until they did. Many of them abandoned their *tāluks*, leaving their ryots the alternative of quitting their lands or paying the farmer his exorbitant demands. The latter, finding greater and greater difficulty in realizing the revenue, imposed upon those who remained that part of the assessment which had been previously paid by those who had fled and given up their lands. The consequence of all this was that a large amount of land fell out of cultivation, and the estate became impoverished.

The Government had so far to participate in the loss, that, when in 1785 they settled the four-fifths share with the zamīndār himself, they reduced the assessment on the whole estate to Rs. 2,44,223, whereas in 1772 it had been Rs. 2,87,614. Even this reduced assessment was so exorbitant, that the zamīndār after holding the estate for two years (1785-86) found himself hopelessly in arrears. He was therefore dispossessed, and the Collector in 1787 divided the whole estate into parts, each of which was

farmed out at a reduced assessment. Even this could not be collected, and the zamīndārs were held responsible for the arrears though they had been ousted from the estate.

PERMANENT SETTLEMENT.

In 1790 Mr. Rocke, who had succeeded Mr. Henckell the year before, carried out the Decennial Settlement, which was declared permanent in 1793. This settlement, as is well known, was a great advance upon the previous system, and involved a great deal more than a mere settlement of the revenue to be paid by zamīndārs. Hitherto, at each settlement the assets of the estate had been estimated; the zamīndār retained the produce of his rent-free lands, together with a suitable but not accurately defined allowance, and handed over the remainder to the Government. A fixed demand was now settled. At the same time the zamīndārs were bound in their turn to make a similar settlement with their ryots, so that the profits from extension of cultivation and from the settlement of new ryots would be enjoyed by the zamīndār, while the profits from the improvement of each ryot's holding would be obtained by the ryot himself. Previously, the ryots had no permanent fixed tenure, and when the Collector settled what the zamīndār should pay to Government, he also settled the amount payable by the ryot to the zamīndār.

Another important change of system consisted in the separation of dependant *tālukdārs*. These were a class of minor zamīndārs created by, and paying their revenue through, the regular zamīndārs. The *tāluks* were of two classes, *pāttāi*, *i.e.*, founded upon a lease or *pāttā*, and *kharidā*, *i.e.*, purchased. In either case they had been created by the zamīndār, who, in return for an adequate consideration, made over to the *tālukdār* almost all his rights in a small portion of his estate, subject to the payment of an annual rent. In this way zamīndārs anxious to realize money had granted away large portions of their estates either rent-free or on quit-rent tenures. Government now ordered that these grants should be separate from the parent estate, *i.e.*, instead of paying their revenue to the zamīndār, the *tālukdārs* should pay it direct to Government. They were thus placed on the footing of other zamīndārs, but those who were bound by their engagements to pay revenue through the zamīndárs only, were held not to be entitled to separation. Another change effected at the same time was the abolition of *sair* dues, *i.e.*, duties levied at *hāts*, or markets, upon goods brought for sale.

Apart from these and a few other circumstances, the basis of the settlement was the settlement of the previous year or of the Collector's calculations, which were accepted for all but the largest estates, in respect of which the Board went into details

and somewhat modified his estimate. That the terms were not very favourable to the zamīndārs will be seen from the figures showing the settlements of the largest estates. Yusufpur (Isufpur) was settled at Rs. 3,02,372, or about Rs. 5,000 more than the demand of the previous year; while the four-fifths share of Muhammadshāhi, an estate which, as already described, had been almost ruined, not only had its revenue raised from Rs. 1,34,665 to Rs. 1,37,697, but a further increase of Rs. 12,634 in five yearly enhancements was imposed. Some of the zamīndārs, the zamīndār of Yusufpur particularly, fought hard for a modification of the terms proposed, but finally had to accept them.

In the end, most of the great zamīndār families were ruined and lost their estates. The assessment was too high, and the entire assets could not be realized, as the ryots were too strong and the law too weak for the zamīndārs. While the law insisted upon the punctual payment of the full amount demanded from the latter, it placed in their hands the most insufficient means of collecting their dues. If any ryot failed to pay his rent, they had to go through the dilatory, expensive, and by no means certain process of suing him in court and executing a decree against him. In the meantime the ryot might take advantage of the delay and abscond. Even the Collector felt this difficulty. We find him complaining in 1798 that he found it most difficult to collect rent in the Government estates; and again, on 21st January 1799, he wrote that the ryots refused to pay and utterly disregarded his orders. Suing them was useless, and he urged that he should be vested with power to imprison defaulters. In the same year (13th March) he wrote that people were refusing to purchase estates when put up for sale, so great was their fear of being ruined through the contumacy of the ryots. Besides the contumacy of the ryots, there was another, though a less effective, cause operating to ruin the old zamīndārs. The Permanent Settlement, by declaring estates to be the zamīndārs' property, but transferable by sale, had facilitated their transference to creditors. Before the settlement many of the zamīndārs were in debt, and now some at least had to part with their lands to meet their creditors' demands.

The general result may be gathered from the fact that, according to a report made by the Collector in 1800, no less than 1,000 estates were in arrears. Among the zamīndārs who were ruined was the largest landholder in the district, Rājā Srīkānta Rai of Yusufpur, who lost one by one the *parganas* making up his estate. Two branches of the Naldāngā family holding the Muhammadshāhi estate also lost their property within 10 years

of the Permanent Settlement, and were reduced to poverty. The third branch (founded by Rām Sankar) with difficulty escaped the same fate, being only saved by the intervention of the Collector. Of all the large zamīndāris in the district only two appear to have withstood the ordeal of these ten years, viz., the Saiyadpur estate, now known as the Trust Estate, and Sultānpur, which had been acquired by Kāsi Nāth Datta in the manner already mentioned.

The necessity of finding a remedy for this state of affairs at length pressed itself upon the attention of Government; and Regulation VII of 1799 was the result. But the mischief was already done, for the new regulation could not give back to the old zamīndārs the property they had lost; it could only give the new zamīndārs stability in the estates they had purchased, by giving them greater facilities for realizing their rents. "Although," writes Sir James Westland, "the ruin of the old zamīndārs cannot but be looked on as matter of regret, yet it was not without many great advantages to the district. Hampered on every side with debt, they could do nothing for the benefit of their estates, having absolutely no capital to work on. The new purchasers of the large zamīndāris were for the most part men of business from Calcutta. They had often, like Rādhāmohan Banerji, who purchased Muhammadshāhi, got their first footing through having lent large sums to the zamīndars, and at all events they were men who had by their own exertions amassed some degree of wealth. They had consequently, so early as 1801, acquired the reputation of being good managers of their estates; they began looking into the old sub-tenures, they extended the cultivation and ceased to oppress the ryots, through whose co-operation alone improvement can be expected. In 1802 the Collector notices the extension of cultivation, and again in 1811 he writes that there is a general reclamation of waste lands, and that the regulations are now strong enough to ensure a speedy realization of the public dues. The Regulation of 1799 had, in fact, so much changed the position of affairs, that whereas the Collector and the zamīndārs had up to that year been continually complaining that they could do nothing with the ryots, the Collector wrote in 1800 that he found the ryots absconded bodily when pressed by the powers the law had given him."

RESUMPTION PROCEEDINGS.

The most important event in the subsequent revenue history of the district is the resumption of revenue free-grants. Before 1772 the zamīndārs had indiscriminately granted away large areas rent free, representing about 116,000 acres or a considerable proportion of the total area of the district. Actual and

bonâ fide alienations could not be distinguished from those effected fraudulently, while the zamīndārs being unable to realize from such lands the revenue assessed upon them by Government were themselves rendered incapable of paying their revenue. The Collector attempted to trace out the alienated lands, but was not successful, for the zamīndāri papers could not be relied on, while the farmers and *tālukdārs* colluded to conceal the tenures which were in danger of being reassesed. At the time of the Permanent Settlement authority to scrutinize such revenue-free grants, and if invalid, to resume them, was especially reserved. The grants were divided into two classes—*bādshāhi* and *hukumī*, the former being those granted by the Mughal Emperor direct, and the latter those granted by his subordinate officials. Regulation XXXVII of 1793 dealt with *bādshāhi* grants, and Regulation XIX of the same year with the others. *bādshāhī* grants were recognized as valid (*bānālī*) if the holder was in possession and could prove his *sanad* was hereditary. *Hukumī* grants, though in their nature invalid, were accepted as valid if dated prior to 1765. All grants of a subsequent date were invalid and were resumed (*bāzyāfti*), but those dating between 1765 and 1790 were accorded a privileged rate of assessment. By Regulation XIX all revenue-free grants made by zamīndārs after 1790 were invalidated, and zamīndārs were authorized to nullify their own grants.

No practical steps were taken to give effect to these Regulations when they were passed, but in 1800 an attempt was made to introduce compulsory registration of *lākhirāj* grants. It proved abortive, and, by Regulation II of 1819, the power of resumption was transferred from the Civil to the Revenue Courts. The latter Regulation was supplemented by Regulation III of 1828, which appointed an executive agency, in the person of a special Commissioner, to give practical effect to the policy of Government. Under his supervision, resumption proceedings were systematically undertaken between the years 1830 and 1850, and a large number of estates were added to the revenue-roll.

LAND TENURES. Estates.

The proprietors of estates are known as zamīndārs or *tālukdārs*, the latter being generally petty landholders, who reside on their estates, while the larger proprietors are generally non-resident. The *tāluks* have their origin in the separation of portions of estates, the zamīndārs having disposed of them by sale, gift or otherwise. The persons who obtained possession of such separated portions of zamīndāris either paid their quota of revenue through the zamīndārs or direct to the State treasury. The exactions of the zamīndārs soon obliged them, however, to

obtain recognition as owners of distinct estates. The separated portions came to be known as *tāluks*, and the holders as independent *tālukdārs* having rights, privileges and responsibilities in all respects similar to those of the zamīndārs, the difference being in origin only. A good instance of the way in which estates became independent and their number increased is afforded by the case of the Nawāra estate. This consisted of some 1,176 holdings scattered all over the district, the revenue of which was, under the Mughal rule, set apart for the maintenance of a river-fleet (*nawāra*) to protect the Ganges and Brahmaputra from the incursions of Magh pirates from Arakan. In the early days of British land revenue administration, the proprietors fell into arrears with their revenue. The different portions situated in each large estate were then separately sold, and the purchaser of each became the proprietor of a *kharidā tāluk*.

At the time of the Permanent Settlement there were only 122 estates in the whole district held direct from Government. Within the course of the next ten years nearly all these fell into arrears, were parcelled out into small shares, and sold to the highest bidders. Yusufpur *pargana*, for instance, which in 1793 was held by Rājā Srīkānta Rai, was three years later divided into 100 large and 39 small estates, and sold to as many separate proprietors. In like manner, Muhammadshāhi, in 1802, and Bhushnā, in 1799, were split up into 115 and 66 separate estates, respectively. In this way the 122 large estates were converted into 5,044 small zamīndāris, many of which were subsequently transferred to other districts at different times as the boundaries of Jessore were readjusted and its area decreased in the manner described in Chapter II. In 1873, when the district was much larger than at present, there were 570 large and 2,286 small estates, making a total of 2,856; in 1883-84 the number of estates in the district as now constituted was 2,580; and the number at present borne on the revenue roll is 2,649.

As regards the nature of the large estates, the following description is quoted from Sir James Westland's *Report on Jessore*:—"It has been described as a consequence of the Permanent Settlement that small zamīndāris and small zamīndārs came to be substituted for great zamīndāris and great zamīndārs. It was, however, natural that of these small zamīndārs some should increase their substance above others, and by buying up zamīndāri after zamīndāri, and tenure after tenure, aggregate in the end a very large estate. Such estates differ entirely in their nature from the old zamīndāris; they are not compact and single estates extending over some tract of country where their owner is

prominent as the great zamīndār, but they are an accumulation of separate and separately held tenures, acquired in different ways and at different times, held under all sorts of different rights, and scattered here and there over the country. Zamīndāri in fact has become more of a profession and less of a position."

The proprietors of estates have freely exercised the power of alienation and have created a large number of tenures, such as *patnīs*, *ijārās* and *gānthīs*. In creating these tenures, and even in giving a lease for a term of years, it has been and is a common practice for the tenure-holder to pay a bonus or premium, which discounts the contingency of many years' increased rent. The system, while meeting the zamīndār's present necessity, means a loss to his posterity, because it is clear that if the bonus were not exacted, a higher rental could be obtained permanently from the land. The process of subinfeudation has not terminated with the *patnīdārs*, *ijārādārs* and *gānthīdārs*. There are lower gradations of tenures under them called *darpatnīs*, *darijārās* and *dargānthīs*, and even further subordinate tenures called *sepatnīs*, *segānthīs*, etc. Many of the under-tenures are of petty size and were originally ryoti holdings. The present holders, having in course of time acquired the status of under-tenure-holders, are now middlemen who collect rents from the ryots and pay them over to the superior landlords, keeping some profit for themselves. Tenures.

Three classes of tenures call for special mention, viz., *gānthīs*, *jots* and *patnī tāluks*. The two former have been described by Sir James Westland as follows:—"One finds in almost every part of Jessore that the lowest class of tenants claiming an interest in the soil is the ryot, who holds a *jamā* and actually cultivates the soil himself, or gives it out in part to a man, half-labourer, half-ryot, who cultivates with his own hand some little piece of ground, but never claims to have any right in the land he cultivates. Above this *jamā*-holder, there is another class of ryot, whose holding extends over a village or half a village, who never cultivates with his own hand, but sometimes has fields under cultivation by his servants. This clsss is in Narāil and Māgurā called *jotdār*, and in the west of the district is called *gānthīdār;* and their tenures are, whatever the law may say, understood by the people to be fixed. These *jotdārs*, or *mukararīdārs*, as they are called from the fixed nature of their tenures, are spread in great numbers over all Naldi. They are for the most part very well off, the rent they pay being small in comparison with what they realize; and the zamīndārs find them a most refractory set. They have substance enough to resist, and they decline paying their rents as long as they can possibly hold them back." *Jots* and *gānthīs*.

Sir James Westland considers it probable that these tenures are founded upon rights acquired or granted at the time of the reclamation of the land—not necessarily its orginal reclamation, which may be very ancient, but the extension of cultivation, which is of more modern date. In support of this view, he cites the descriptions of the tenure given in the Bhushnā records of 1798 At that time the lands of each *jot* were scattered here and there, and were far from compact. Each *jot* apparently contained lands that were being reclaimed, or had been reclaimed, by the *jotdār*: Naldi and Telihāti, especially, were far from completely reclaimed at the end of the eighteenth century To the *gānthī* tenure in the west of the district he ascribes a different origin, regarding the arrangement rather as one made by the zamīndār for the collection of his rents, though the *gānthīdār* there also had much to do in the way of promoting cultivation and settling land. He points out that in 1788 Mr. Henckell reported that the *gānthīdār* was usually also the farmer of the lands adjoining his own holding, who, having a profitable tenure in his own lands, was expected to remit to the zamīndār the entire realizations of his farm.

"Whether the origin of the tenure called *gānthī* was or was not that indicated by Mr. Henckell, viz., giving certain lands on a low rent to an individual who undertook to collect and pay in, as farmer, the revenues of other lands adjacent, it is certain that in many places this sort of connection still exists between *gānthī* and farming. In many places the *gānthīdār* of the whole or part of a village is still looked upon as the person who naturally occupies the position of farmer in some adjacent lands, and this theory of the connection between *gānthīdār* and farmer is supported by the terms which Mr. Henckell's successor uses in a letter where he says that almost all the cultivating ryots pay rent either to a farmer or a *gānthīdār*. It is not meant that this theory is applicable to all *gānthīs* at present existing, for many, if not most, of these date their origin from periods subsequent to the time of which I am writing, and have more to do with the zamīndārs desire to fill his purse than with the land system indicated above. The Rājā of Chānchrā, for example, when in 1796 he was getting into difficulties, created in the Yusufpur estate a large number of *gānthī*t enures, receiving of course a premium from the tenants."

Patnī tāluks. The *patnī tāluks* are a class of tenures which originated in the estate of the Mahārājā of Burdwān. At the Permanent Settlement the assessment of the estate was very high, and in order to ensure easy and punctual realization of the rent, leases of land

in perpetuity, to be held at a fixed rent, were given to a large number of middlemen. These tenures are known as *patnī* (literally, dependent) *tāluks*, and are in effect leases which bind the holders by terms and conditions similar to those by which superior landlords are bound to the State. A large number were created in Jessore after the enactment of Regulation VIII of 1819, known as the Patni Sale Law, which declared the validity of such permanent tenures, defined the relative rights of the zamīndārs and their subordinate *patnī tālukdārs*, established a summary process for the sale of such tenures in satisfaction of the zamīndār's demand of rent, and also legalized under-letting, on similar terms, by the *patnīdārs* and others. This was followed by the creation of an large number of *patnīs* throughout Jessore. In Naldi, for instance, there were only five of these tenures in 1819, but they increased to 221 in 1851, the whole *pargana* with the exception of five villages having been let out on permanent leases The *patnī* tenure is now very popular with zamīndārs who wish to divest themselves of the direct management of their property or part of it, or who wish to raise money in the shape of a bonus.

As regards its incidents, it may be described as a tenure created by the zamīndār to be held by the lessee and his heirs or transferees for ever at a rent fixed in perpetuity, subject to the liability of annulment on sale of the parent estate for arrears of the Government revenue, unless protected against the rights exercisable by auction-purchasers by common or special registry, as prescribed by sections 37 and 39 of Act XI of 1859. The lessee is called upon to furnish collateral security for the rent and for his conduct generally, or he is excused from this obligation at the zamīndar's discretion.

Tenancies.

It is reported that in Jessore the provisions of section 50 of the Bengal Tenancy Act, that, unless a landlord can prove that the rate of rent has been altered within the last 20 years, it shall be presumed to be permanently fixed, is constantly tending to convert the holding of an occupancy ryot into a permanent and hereditary tenure and a suitable investment for the moneyed classes. There is consequently a tendency for the non-cultivating classes to buy up the rights of occupancy ryots and sub-let the lands to under-ryots, who actually cultivate them. These middlemen, who buy up the rights of occupancy ryots, extort high rents from the actual cultivators. The latter are said to pay about two-fifths of the value of the gross produce of the land they hold, but under-ryots usually pay in kind, and not in cash. If they pay in kind they generally give half the produce, but if they pay cash, they

have to pay on an average about twice as much as an occupancy ryot pays to the zamīndār.

Utbandi system. There is in this district a peculiar class of holding known as *utbandi*, *i.e.*, assessed according to cultivation, from *uthit*, meaning risen or cultivated (as opposed to *patit*, fallen or uncultivated), and *bandi*, meaning assessment. In 1884 these holdings were described by the Collector as follows:—"There are few tenures of this description in this district. They are generally confined to waste lands and *bil* lands, which are for the whole or greater part of the year under water, and which are cultivated by the ryots under special contract, generally from year to year. These lands are taken at fixed or progressive rates of rent on terms agreed to by the ryots. The landlord cannot, or at all events does not, enhance the rent, which should be payable in proportion to the quantity of land reclaimed and cultivated. The same ryots can have the same lands for any numbers of years, but the custom is that he does not acquire a right of occupancy. As a matter of fact, the ryot is not disturbed as long as he pays his rent and behaves himself well. The landlord does not enhance the rate originally agreed to if the ryot refuses to pay such increase, but if there are conditions in the lease or conditions verbally agreed to, the rate is enhanced. The ryot can be ejected at the will of the landlord as the tenures are not *kaim* or pucca. The zamīndār claims no rent for any year for land not cultivated, though it remains in possession of the ryot. The land is gradually cultivated by the ryot, and after the crops are harvested, the land is measured, and the rent is assessed. The assessment is of course made at the rate originally agreed to."

In the report of the Government of Bengal on the Bengal Tenancy Bill (1884) the *utbandi* holding was described as follows:—"A tenancy from year to year and sometimes from season to season, the rent being regulated, not, as in the case of *hālhāsili*, by a lump payment in money for the land cultivated, but by the appraisement of the crop on the ground, and according to its character. So far it resembles the tenure by crop appraisement of the *bhāoli* system; but there is between them this marked difference, that while in the latter the land does not change hands from year to year, in the former it may." The Bengal Government, when the Tenancy Bill was under consideration, proposed to treat *utbandi* lands as ordinary ryoti lands were treated, *i.e.*, to presume that tenants of *utbandi* lands were settled ryots if they had held any land in the village for 12 years, and as settled ryots to declare that they had occupancy

rights in all lands held by them in the village. The Select Committee did not, however, agree to this proposal, and applied the provisions relating to *char* and *diāra* lands to *utbandi* land also Accordingly, by section 180 of the Bengal Tenancy Act, it was laid down that a *utbandi* tenant can acquire no rights of occupancy until he has held the land for 12 continuous years, and that, until he acquires such a right, he is liable to pay the rent agreed on between him and the landlord.

As regards the nature of the tenancy, the most authoritative dictum of the High Court would appear to be that delivered by the Chief Justice Sir W. C. Petheram, and Mr Justice Tottenham in the case of Beni Mādhab Chakravarti *versus* Bhuban Mohan Biswās (I. L R., 17 Calc., 393). They rejected the earlier opinions of Judges, which "had not been quite uniform," and after discussing those given by Sir W. W. Hunter and of Sir Henry Cotton, and the reports submitted to Government by the Collectors of the Presidency Division in 1881, concluded that—"The descriptions of *utbandi* seem to refer rather to particular areas taken for cultivation for limited periods, and then given up, than to holdings of which parts are cultivated, and other parts lie fallow, while the rent for the whole is assessed year by year with reference to the quantity within the holding under cultivation in that year. A holding of the latter description hardly seems to answer to the general conception of *utbandi*."

The following are the chief varieties of rent-free tenures:— *Debottar*, lands assigned for the maintenance of worship of the gods; *Brahmottar*, lands granted to Brahmans; *Bhogottar*, lands granted to priests or spiritual guides; *Mahattran*, granted to religious persons; *Chirāghi*, set apart for keeping a lamp burning at a Muhammadan tomb; *Pīrottar*, set apart for the maintenance of the tomb of a *Pīr* or Muhammadan saint; and *Chākrān*; service-lands granted to village watchmen, artisans, etc. Rent-free tenures.

CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES AND STAFF.

THE administration of the district is in charge of the Collector under the Commissioner of the Presidency Division. For general administrative purposes, it is divided into five subdivisions, with head-quarters at Jessore, Jhenida, Māgurā, Narāil and Bangāon. The head-quarters subdivision is under the direct supervision of the Collector, who has a regular staff of five Deputy Collectors with one or two Sub-Deputy Collectors; while the Jhenida, Māgurā, Narāil and Bangāon subdivisions are each in charge of a Subdivisional Officer, generally a member of the Provincial Civil Service. The Subdivisional Officers are assisted by Sub-Deputy Collectors.

REVENUE.

The revenue of the district, under the main heads, was Rs. 14,96,000 in 1883-84 after the formation of the district as now constituted, the Bangāon subdivision being transferred to it from the adjoining district of Nadiā in 1883. It rose to Rs. 15,42,000 in 1890-91 and to Rs. 16,92,000 in 1900-01. In 1910-11 it amounted to Rs. 17,99,860, of which Rs. 8,73,917 were derived from land revenue, Rs. 5,65,994 from stamps, Rs. 2,12,422 from cesses, Rs. 1,06,278 from excise, and Rs. 41,249 from income-tax

Land Revenue.

The collections of land revenue increased from Rs. 8,34,000 in 1883-84 to Rs. 8,69,000 in 1890-91, but fell to Rs. 8,60,000 in 1900-01. In 1910-11 they amounted to Rs. 8,73,917, when they accounted for nearly half of the total revenue of the district. The current demand in the year last named was Rs. 8,67,177 payable by 2,686 estates, of which 2,581 with a current demand of Rs. 8,57,352 were permanently settled estates, and 45 with a demand of Rs. 4,181 were temporarily settled estates, while there were 60 estates, with a demand of Rs. 5,644, held direct by Government.

Stamps.

Next to land revenue, the most important source of revenue is the sale of stamps, the income from which amounted to Rs. 4,53,034 in 1895-96, and averaged Rs. 4,47,928 per annum

in the quinquennium ending in 1899-1900. During the five years ending in 1904-05 the receipts averaged Rs. 4,81,478 per annum, and in 1910-11 they were Rs. 5,65,994 as against Rs. 4,77,825 in 1900-01. The sale of judicial stamps alone realized Rs. 4,60,170 in 1910-11, as compared with Rs. 3,88,927 in 1900-01; this increase may be attributed to the growth of litigation, the sale of court-fee stamps realizing Rs. 4,24,797 in 1910-11. The receipts from non-judicial stamps rose during the same decade from Rs. 88,898 to Rs. 1,05,824.

Road and public works cesses are, as usual, levied at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee. The collections rose from Rs. 2,00,462 in 1901-02 to Rs. 2,12,422 in 1910-11. The current demand in the year last named was Rs. 2,01,693, of which the greater part (Rs. 1,70,565) was payable by 3,463 revenue-paying estates, while Rs. 4,299 were due from 217 revenue-free estates, Rs 23,830 from 11,087 rent-fee lands, and Rs. 2,999 from 206 *hāts* and fairs. The number of estates assessed to cesses was thus 14,973, while the number of recorded shareholders was 49,496. There were 40,259 tenures assessed to cesses with 71,303 shareholders, the number of tenures being thus nearly thrice the number of estates. The total demand of cesses (Rs. 2,54,704) was nearly equal to a fourth of the demand of land revenue (Rs. 8,90,779). Cesses.

The next important source of revenue is excise, the receipts from which increased from Rs. 1,02,482 in 1900-01 to Rs. 1,06,278 in 1910-11—a total lower than in any other district in Bengal except Angul. The net excise revenue in the latter year was Rs. 544 per 10,000 of the population (approximately 10 pies per head), as compared with the average of Rs. 5,977 for the Presidency Division and Rs. 3,236 for the Province as a whole. Over a third of the total excise revenue was obtained from the duty and license fees levied on *gānja*, *i.e.*, the unimpregnated dried flowering tops of the cultivated female hemp plant (*Cannabis indica*) and the resinous exudation on them, which realized Rs. 38,313 in 1910-11. The total incidence of the revenue accruing from hemp drugs was, however, only Rs. 220 for every 10,000, and the number of shops licensed to sell by retail was 65, or one shop to every 27,050 persons. Excise.

After *gānja*, the largest item in the excise revenue consists of the receipts from the sale of country spirit, which in 1910-11 realized Rs. 38,197 or a little over a third of the total. The manufacture and sale of country spirit are carried on under what is known as the contract supply system, which was introduced in 1906. Under this system the local manufacture of country

spirit has been prohibited, and a contract has been made with a firm of distillers for its supply. The contractors are forbidden to hold retail licenses for the sale of the spirit, but bring it to the various depôts, where it is blended and reduced to certain fixed strengths, at which alone it may be supplied to retail vendors and sold by the latter to consumers. In 1910-11 there were altogether 44 shops licensed for its sale, *i.e.*, one retail shop to every 66 square miles and 39,960 persons, while the average consumption of the liquor was only 2 proof-gallons per 1,000 of the population. These figures alone show how little addicted the people of Jessore are to drinking spirits. If further proof be needed, it may be mentioned that the gross receipts from the license fees and duty on country spirit and *tari* (the consumption of which is insignificant) are less than in any other district in the Province except Balasore, representing (in 1910-11) Rs. 223 per 10,000 of the population, as compared with Rs. 4,258 for the Presidency Division and Rs. 2,251 for the whole of Bengal.

The receipts from opium account for practically all the remainder of the excise revenue, amounting in 1910-11 to Rs. 28,206 or Rs. 160 per 10,000 of the population, as against the average of Rs. 960 returned for the Presidency Division and Rs. 503 for the whole of Bengal. There were in that year 56 shops for the retail sale of opium, representing one retail shop for every 52 square miles and every 31,398 persons.

Income-tax.

In 1896-97 the income-tax yielded Rs. 46,659 paid by 2,325 assessees, and in 1901-02 the amount derived from the tax increased to Rs. 49,976 and the number of assessees to 2,342. At that time the minimum income assessable was Rs. 500, but this was raised to Rs. 1,000 in 1903, thereby affording relief to a number of petty traders, money-lenders and clerks. The number of assessees consequently fell in 1903-04 to 729 and the collections to Rs. 36,174. In 1910-11 the tax brought in Rs. 41,249 paid by 816 assessees.

Registration.

There are 26 offices for the registration of assurances under Act III of 1877. At Jessore the District Sub-Registrar deals, as usual, with the documents presented there and assists the District Magistrate, who is *ex-officio* District Registrar, in supervising the proceedings of the Sub-Registrars in charge of other registration offices. In the five years 1895-99 the average number of documents registered annually was 82,699; in the next quinquennium (1900-04) it was 91,237; and in the quinquennium 1905-10 it rose to 100,721. The increase is ascribed partly to poor harvests and partly to a growing appreciation

of the advantages of registration. In 1910 the number fell to 96,763 as shown in the marginal statement, which gives the salient statistics for that year. This decrease is chiefly due to good harvests in 1909. Registration would have probably decreased further in 1910, had it not been that a cyclone in October 1909, and the resultant damage to the *āman* and jute crops in certain parts of the district, led to an increase in mortgages and bonds.

OFFICES.	Total number of documents registered in books I, II, and IV.	Total receipts.	Total expenditure.
		Rs.	Rs.
Jessore, 1st Joint } Do., 2nd do. }	6,020	10,487	9,131
Bāgherpārā	2,131	1,437	1,384
Bangāon	4,873	4,994	2,669
Gadkhāli (Jhingergāchhā)	5,754	3,933	2,680
Harinākundā	1,754	1,511	2,261
Jhenida ...	3,421	2,616	2,628
Jhenida, Joint at Gopāpur Bazar.	1,273	962	1,592
Kāliganj	2,818	2,169	1,405
Do. Joint at Bara Bazar	2,010	1,427	1,150
Kāliā	5,840	4,429	2,688
Keshabpur	5,234	3,566	2,119
Khālispur	2,133	1,930	2,472
Kotchāndpur	1,603	1,281	1,209
Lakshmīpāsā	5,740	4,338	2,526
Ditto, Joint at Alfadāngā.	3,815	2,791	1,506
Māgurā ...	5,706	4,430	2,572
Do., Joint at Srīpur ..	3,994	3,248	1,477
Manirāmpur	5,274	3,271	1,873
Ditto, Joint at Rājganj	3,021	1,971	1,484
Muhammadpur	5,337	3,892	2,702
Narāil	4,784	3,448	2,207
Do., Joint at Singāsalpur	4,115	2,842	2,071
Salkhiā (Chandra) ...	2,436	1,785	1,611
Sailkupā	5,013	4,053	2,965
Do., Joint at Ābaipur ..	2,604	2,058	1,824
Total ..	96,763	78,869	58,206

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. Civil Justice.

The judicial staff entertained for the administration of civil justice consists of the District and Sessions Judge, a Sub-Judge, an additional Sub-Judge, who is also Additional Sub-Judge of Khulnā, and of 12 Munsifs, of whom three hold their courts at Jessore, three at Narāil, and two each at Jhenida, Māgurā and Bangāon.

Criminal Justice.

Criminal justice is administered by the District and Sessions Judge, the District Magistrate, and the various Deputy, Sub-Deputy and Honorary Magistrates subordinate to him. The sanctioned staff at Jessore consists, in addition to the *District Magistrate*, of four Deputy Magistrates of the first class and one Deputy Magistrate of the second or third class. Besides these officers, one or two Sub-Deputy Magistrates with second or third class powers are generally posted to the head-quarters station. The Subdivisional Officers of Jhenida, Narāil, Bangāon and Māgurā are almost invariably Magistrates of the first class, and the first three are sometimes assisted by Sub-Deputy Magistrates vested with second or third class powers. In addition to the stipendiary Magistrates, there are Benches of Honorary Magistrates at Jessore, Jhenida, Māgurā, Narāil, Bangāon,

Maheshpur and Kotchāndpur. Some Honorary Magistrates are also empowered to sit singly for the trial of cases made over to them.

Criminal classes. There is one criminal caste in Jessore, viz., the Bediyās, who are found in the Jhingergāchhā thāna. They are a predatory caste, who call themselves Shikāris, but are known by others as Bediyās, which has the same meaning, being derived from *byādha*, a hunter, Nominally they are cultivators, and they keep up the semblance of that profession by holding a *bighā* or two of land, but really they make their living by burglary. During the light half of the moon they remain at home, but in the dark half they leave their houses, and wander over Nadiā, the 24-Parganas, Hooghly and other districts cutting their way into houses at night (an art in which they are adepts) and taking any plunder they can get. They confine themselves chiefly to ornaments in silver and gold and to cash, because they are easily carried away and disposed of, and after their fortnight of plunder is over, they return home with their spoils. They hardly ever conceal the stolen property in their houses, but hide it in distant places, until they find an opportunity to dispose of it.

Pānkhāchar Kayasths. Another class consists of the Pānkhāchar Kayasths so called from the place of that name in the Lohāgorā thāna. Their *modus operandi* is as follows:—They sally forth in boats or on foot to markets and *melās*, a favourite disguise being that of well-to-do Babus. Entering the shops of jewellers or cloth-merchants, the fictitious Babus examine their goods, and take the opportunity to pass articles from hand to hand to their companions outside. After this they leave quietly, offering a price considerably less than that asked by the shop-keeper, which the latter naturally refuses. Or they go into a *poddar's* shop, and tendering a bad coin, ask for change. A dispute follows, in the course of which the rest of the gang rob the *poddar*. If one of them is caught in the act of stealing anything, he will throw it away and feign madness. If the thief runs away with his booty and is pursued, one of his companions warns him by crying out '*Phela Phela*'—a man's name, which also means throw it away.

They also frequent prostitutes' houses, make the prostitutes drunk and then rob them. Another device of theirs is to go dressed up as a barber, to a shopkeeper or *mānjhi* of a boat, Before shaving his unsuspecting client, the Pānkhāchar Kayasth diverts his attention by telling him wonderful tales, etc., while other members of the gang enter the shop or boat and carry off whatever they can lay their hands on. The principal actor then

slips away with some excuse, *e.g.*, that he has left his razor at home.

For police purposes, the district is divided into 17 thānas with 26 police-stations as shown in the margin. At Amrita Bazar there is a beat-house, which has been established to check crime among the Bediyās; there is another beat-house at Pān khāchar, a river patrol being maintained there for the protection of river traffic and for the prevention and detection of crime on the waterways. The regular police force consisted in 1910 of the Superintendent, 7 Inspectors, 55 Sub-Inspectors, 56 Head Constables and 425 constables. The total strength of the force was, therefore, 544 men representing one policeman to every 5·4 square miles and to every 3,232 of the population. There is also a small body of town police in the municipalities. The rural police for the watch and ward of villages in the interior consisted in the same year of 250 *dafadārs* and 3,401 *chaukīdārs*, representing one *chaukīdār* to every 517 inhabitants. The new *panchāyat* system has been introduced, *i.e.*, heads of *panchāyats* are vested with the powers of a Magistrate under certain sections of the Criminal Procedure Code. POLICE.

Subdivision.	Thāna.	Police-stations in each thāna.
Jessore ...	Jessore	Jessore. Kotwali. Chaugāchha.
	Bāgherpārā ...	Bāgherpārā.
	Jhingergāchha ...	Jhingergāchha.
	Manirāmpur ...	Manirāmpur. Naopārā.
	Keshabpur ...	Keshabpur.
Bangāon ...	Bangāon	Bangāon.
	Gaighāta	Gaighāta.
	Sarsa	Sarsa.
	Maheshpur ...	Maheshpur.
Jhenida ...	Jhenida	Jhenida. Kotchāndpur.
	Sāilkupa ...	Sāilkupa. Harinakunda.
	Kāliganj	Kāliganj.
Māgurā ...	Māgura	Māgura. Sripur. Salika.
	Muhammadpur ...	Muhammadpur.
	Narail	Narail.
	Barkālia (Kālia) ...	Abhayanagar. Barkālia (Kālia.)
	Lohāgara ...	Lohāgara. Alfadānga.

There is a district jail at Jessore and a subsidiary jail at each of the outlying subdivisional head-quarters, viz., Jhenida, Māgurā, Narāil and Bangāon. In 1910 the sub-jail at Jhenida had accommodation for 11 prisoners, viz., 8 male convicts and 3 female convicts, and that at Māgurā for 71 prisoners, viz., 34 male convicts, 9 female convicts, and 20 under-trial prisoners while the hospital had accommodation for 8 patients. The sub-jail at Narāil had accommodation for 34 prisoners, viz., 9 male and 4 female convicts, 18 under-trial prisoners and 3 patients in the hospital, and that at Bangāon for 12 prisoners, viz., 9 male JAILS.

and 3 female convicts. The district jail had accommodation for 402 prisoners; there are barracks for 300 male convicts, 10 female convicts and 29 under-trial prisoners, and cells for 6 prisoners; while the hospital has beds for 57 patients. The industries carried on in the district jail are brick-making, *surki* and *khoā* pounding, cane and bamboo work, and the manufacture of jute string, coir mats, wire netting, mustard oil, cotton rugs, *dhotis* and *chādars*.

CHAPTER XII.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

DISTRICT BOARD.

OUTSIDE the municipalities of Jessore, Kotchāndpur and Maheshpur, the administration of local affairs, such as the management of roads, supervision of middle and primary schools, the control of dispensaries and provision for sanitary works, rests with the District Board, assisted by the Local Boards of Jessore, Jhenida, Māgurā, Narāil and Bangāon and by the Union Committees of Keshabpur, Kāliā, Harinākundā, Jhenidā and Bangāon.

The District Board consists of 25 members (including the District Magistrate, who is Chairman), of whom 6 are nominated by Government and 12 are elected, while 7 are *ex-officio* members. Its average annual income during the 10 years ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 1,87,000, of which Rs. 91,000 were derived from Provincial rates; and the average annual expenditure was Rs 1,86,000, of which Rs. 1,18,000 were spent on civil works, Rs. 32,000 on education, and Rs. 5,000 on medical relief. In 1910-11 its income was Rs. 1,81,909 (excluding an opening balance of Rs. 57,710), the principal receipts being Rs. 1,02,044 derived from rates, Rs. 25,425 obtained from civil works (including Rs. 10,534 from contributions, and Rs. 11,642 from tolls on ferries), Rs. 18,663 obtained from 286 pounds, Rs. 18,745 from contributions for medical purposes, and Rs. 8,555 from education. The incidence of taxation was 11 pies per head of the population. The expenditure in the same year was Rs 1,85,244, of which Rs. 1,14,249 were spent on civil works, Rs. 40,0[illegible]3 on education, and Rs. 16,040 on medical relief.

According to the returns for 1910-11, the District Board maintains 1,040 miles of roads, of which 128 miles are metalled and 461 miles are unmetalled, the remainder being village roads with an aggregate length of 451 miles; the cost of maintaining these roads in 1910-11 was Rs. 320, Rs. 31, and Rs. 9 per mile, respectively. It gives grants-in-aid to 1 High school, 39 Middle schools, 129 Upper Primary schools,

1020 Lower Primary schools, 208 *maktabs* and 17 *tols*. No educational institution is wholly maintained by the Board. For the purpose of supervision, it entertains 7 Inspecting Pandits. It pays four scholarships of Rs. 5 each for training pupils belonging to this district in the artisan class of the Coronation Technical school at Khulnā, besides providing scholarships for students in the Sibpur Engineering College and the Calcutta Deaf and Dumb School. The Board maintains 7 dispensaries and aids 7 others, and has recently appointed a Sanitary Inspector to look after the sanitation of the district; in 1910-11 altogether 11·2 per cent. of its ordinary income was expended on medical relief and sanitation. It also maintains a Veterinary Assistant and a veterinary dispensary at Jessore, and it provides a scholarship at the Belgāchhiā Veterinary College.

LOCAL BOARDS.

In subordination to the District Board are the Jessore, Jhenida, Māgurā, Narāil and Bangāon Local Boards, the jurisdiction of each corresponding to the subdivisional charge of the same name. The Jessore Local Board has 18 members, of whom 5 are elected and 13 are nominated by Government. The Jhenida Local Board has 9 members, of whom 2 are elected and 7 are nominated by Government; the Māgurā Local Board has 9 members, of whom 4 are elected and 5 are nominated; the Narāil Local Board has 9 members, of whom 3 are elected and 6 are nominated by Government; while the Bangāon Local Board has 12 members, all nominated by Government. The functions of these bodies consist of the administration of village roads, payment of stipends and rewards to the gurus of Primary schools and the collection of pound and ferry rents.

UNION COMMITTEES.

There are 5 Union Committees in the district, of which Kālia and Keshabpur were established in 1895, Harināikundā in 1896, and Jhenida and Bangāon in 1911-12. There also used to be a Union Committee at Gārāpota, which has recently been abolished. The marginal table shows the area and population comprised in each Union

Name.	Area in square miles.	Population.	No. of members.	No. of villages.
1. Harināikundā ...	8	9,500	9	17
2. Kāliā ...	36	14,799	9	22
3. Keshabpur ...	17½	13,391	9	14
4. Jhenida ...	6	6,659	9	9
5. Bangāon ...	4	4,430	7	3

as constituted in 1910-11. The functions of the Union Committees consist of the maintenance of roads within their respective areas, and the supervision of primary education and village sanitation.

MUNICIPALITIES. There are three municipalities in the district, viz., Jessore, Kotchāndpur and Maheshpur. The number of rate-payers in 1910-11 was 4,042, representing 19 per cent. of the total number (21,198) of persons residing within municipal limits, as compared with the average of 16·2 per cent. for the whole of the Presidency Division. The average incidence of taxation was Re. 1-4-1 per head of the population, as against the Divisional average of Re. 1-7-6, and it varied from annas Maheshpur to Rs. 2-2-9 in Jessore.

Jessore. The Jessore Municipality was established in 1864, and its affairs are administered by a Municipal Board, consisting of 18 members, of whom 12 are elected, and 6 are nominated by Government. The area within municipal limits is 4 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 1,690 or 19 per cent. of the population. The average annual income for the decade ending in 1910-11 was Rs. 28,826 and the expenditure Rs. 24,801. In 1910-11 the income was Rs. 28,710 (besides an opening balance of Rs. 46,419), the main sources of income being (1) a tax on houses and lands, levied at the rate of 7½ per cent. on the annual value of the holdings, which brought in Rs. 10,558; (2) a conservancy rate, assessed according to a scale varying from Re. 1 to Rs. 50 per annum, which realized Rs. 5,424; and (3) a tax on animals and vehicles, which brought in Rs. 2,996. The total income from municipal rates and taxes was Rs. 19,307 and the incidence of taxation was Rs. 2-2-9 per head of the population. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 33,645. The Municipality is now engaged in the construction of water works, costing 1½ lakhs, which will give the whole town a supply of drinking water: the work is approaching completion.

Kotchāndpur. The municipality at Kotchāndpur was established in 1883. It is administered by a Municipal Board consisting of 10 members, of whom 6 are elected and 4 are nominated by Government. The area within municipal limits is 4 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 1,454, representing 18 per cent. of the population residing within municipal area. The average annual income for the decade ending in 1910-11 was Rs. 7,232 and the expenditure was Rs. 7,071. In 1910-11 the income was Rs. 7,195 (besides an opening balance of Rs. 1,570), the principal sources of income being (1) a tax on persons, levied generally at the rate of 1 per cent. on the annual income of the rate-payers, which brought in Rs. 3,103; (2) a latrine tax levied in portions of Wards Nos. I and II at the rate of Rs. 3-12 per annum on the annual value of holdings, which brought in Rs. 646; and

(3) a tax on animals and vehicles, which realized Rs. 2,153. The aggregate income from municipal rates and taxes was Rs. 6,268, and the incidence of taxation was annas 10-8 per head of the population. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 7,481.

Maheshpur. Maheshpur was constituted a municipality in 1869 and is administered by a Municipal Board consisting of 15 Commissioners, of whom 10 are elected and 4 are nominated by Government and 1 is an *ex-officio* member. The area within municipal limits is 3 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 898, representing 21 per cent. of the population. The average annual income and expenditure for the decade ending in 1901-02 were Rs. 3,600 and Rs. 2,700 respectively. In 1910-11 its total income was Rs. 3,016 (excluding a small opening balance of Rs. 902), the principal item in the receipts being a tax on persons assessed at the rate of Re. 1-8 per annum on the annual income of the rate-payers, which brought in Rs. 1,935. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 3,420. This Municipality has suffered severely from malarial fever.

CHAPTER XIII.

EDUCATION.

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION.

THE marginal table shows the number of schools and scholars in the Jessore district since 1890-91. The figures for 1870-71 and 1880-81 include the returns for Khulnā, which then formed part of Jessore, and exclude those or Bangāon which was then comprised in the Nadiā district. In spite, however, of the fact that the district as then constituted extended over a larger area than it does at present, there has been a considerable increase in the number both of schools and scholars. On the other hand, the statistics obtained at the census of 1911 do not show a very high standard of education, for the number of persons returned as literate was only 122,678 representing 6·9 per cent. of the population, the proportion in the case of males being 12 per cent. and in the case of females not more than 0·9 per cent. The number of persons able to read and write English was also small, being only 14,201.

Year.		Schools.	Scholars.
1890-91	...	1,063	30,379
1900-01	...	979	34,878
1910-11	...	1,454	53,070

EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS.

According to the returns for 1910-11, altogether 35·36 per cent. of the boys of school-going age are under instruction, the corresponding proportion in the case of girls being 4·2 per cent.; there is on the average one school to every 3·3 villages. The supervising staff in that year consisted of a Deputy Inspector of Schools, assisted by an Additional Deputy Inspector, 9 Sub-Inspectors, 1 Assistant Sub-Inspector and 7 Inspecting Pandits.

COLLEGES.

There is only one college in the district, viz., the Victoria College at Narāil. This college was originally a High English school, founded by the late Bābu Rām Ratan Rai of Narāil, and was raised to the status of a second grade college in 1886. I was constituted a first grade college in 1890, but there are at present no B.A. classes. The staff consists of a Principal and Professor of English Literature, a Professor of Mathematics, a Professor of Logic and History, and two Professors of Sanskrit.

There is a hostel attached to the college, and also a collegiate school, both of which are under the supervision of the Principal.

SECOND-ARY There are no less than 82 secondary schools in the district including 24 High schools, 33 Middle English schools and 25 Middle Vernacular schools. The High schools had, on the 31st March 1911, 4,556 pupils on the rolls, giving an average of 190 per school. The following table gives the salient statistics of the High schools on that date :—

Managed by Government.

School.	Number of pupils.
Jessore Zilā	277

Aided.

School.	Number of pupils.
Bangāon	200
Maheshpur	138
Māgurā	237
Narāil Collegiate	294
Kāliā	328
Jhenida	109
Sailkupa	271
Kotchāndpur	118
Abaipur	210
Joradaha	153
Panjiā	80
Sādhuhāti	82

Unaided.

School.	Number of pupils.
Jessore Sammilani	265
Naldāngā Bhusan	75
Bidyānandakāti	64
Binodpur	215
Gangārāmpur	61
Baghutiā	132
Itna	275
Lakshmīpāsā	230
Narāil Subdivisional	230
Lohāgarā	316
Benipur	171

Of the Middle English schools, 27 receive grants-in-aid and 6 are unaided; they had 2,465 pupils on the rolls on 31st March 1911, the average per school being 65. The attendance at Middle Vernacular schools is far less, the number of pupils on the same date being only 1,387. or 55 per school; 23 of these schools are aided and 2 are unaided.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS. In 1910-11 there were 980 boys' Primary schools with an aggregate attendance of 33,572 pupils; of these, 144 with 6,896 pupils were Upper Primary, and 836, with 26,676 pupils, were Lower Primary schools, the average attendance being 48 and 32, respectively. Among schools of the former class, 10 are under public management, 132 are aided, and 2 only are unaided; of the latter class 721 are aided and 115 are unaided.

GIRLS' SCHOOLS. The number of girls under instruction, whether in boys' or girls' schools, was 4,577 in 1910-11, viz., 5 in Middle schools, 350 in Upper Primary schools, and 4,222 in Lower Primary schools. Altogether 216 schools have been opened for girls, which in that year had an attendance of 4,126 scholars in 1910-11, representing an average of 19 per school. Of these schools 8 with 377 pupils are managed by Government, 183 with 3,298 pupils are aided and 25 with 451 pupils are unaided. An aided zanāna class at Panisara is reported to be doing useful work.

TECHNICAL SCHOOLS. The Baptist Zanāna Mission has started an industrial school with 18 female pupils at Jessore, at which lace-work, embroidery, drawing and threadwork are taught in addition to arithmetic and Bengali. The District Board also grants two scholarships, of the value of Rs. 10 each, tenable at the Civil Engineering College, Sibpur, as well as four scholarships of Rs. 5 each tenable at the Khulnā Coronation Technical School.

TRAINING SCHOOLS. Ten *guru* training schools have been established, viz., two in each of the five subdivisions of the district. In 1908-09 they had not all got buildings; those at Lakshmanpur, Mohanpur and Rayra had been completed, and materials only had been collected for those at Churāmankāti, Dighalia, Charchandanpratāp and Ghatbaon.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS. The few private institutions in the district consist of Korān schools and elementary schools which have not adopted the departmental standard. In the year 1910-11 there were 2 schools of this class with 34 pupils.

EDUCATION OF MUHAMMADANS. The returns for 1910-11 show that there are 26,389 Muhammadan pupils at school or 49·72 per cent. of the total number of pupils, as against 26,589 Hindu pupils or 50·11 per cent.

With these figures may be compared those returned for Muhammadans and Hindus at the census of 1911, according to which they constitute 62 and 38 per cent., respectively, of the population. It is apparent, therefore, that the Muhammadans of Jessore are not so ready to take advantage of their educational opportunities as the Hindus. Most of the Muhammadan pupils moreover are in the primary stage of instruction, only 2,205 studying in secondary schools, of whom 955 attend High schools. Three Middle scholarships are reserved for Muhammadans, and 204 *maktabs* have adopted the departmental standard.

CHAPTER XIV.

GAZETTEER.

Amrita Bazar.—A village in the Jessore subdivision situated 4 miles north of Jhingergāchhā. Nearly half a century ago a family of Ghoses, who were small zamīndārs in the adjoining village of Māgurā, established a bazar here, which they named, after their mother, Amrita. After this, they set up a printing press, and in 1868 established a Bengali newspaper called the *Amrita Bazar Patrikā.* The paper was subsequently removed to Calcutta, where it was published in English. It is now one of the principal Anglo-Indian journals, *i.e.*, journals published in English and owned, edited and read by Indians. Amrita Bazar is also the birth place of the late Babu Sisir Kumar Ghose, the author of several Bengali religious books.

Bangāon.—Head-quarters of the subdivision of the same name situated on the Ichhāmatī river, 27 miles south-west of Jessore. Population (1911) 3,963. Formerly an insignificant village, Bangāon became of importance owing to its position on the Calcutta road, and its trade increased still further when a railway station was opened. It now forms a junction of the central and eastern sections of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, thus having connection with Calcutta, Jessore and Rānāghāt. The town contains the usual public offices found at a subdivisional head-quarters, a Munsif's court, sub-registry office, postal-telegraph office, dispensary, and dāk bungalow. There is a printing press, called the Pallibarta Press, which publishes a weekly newspaper, the *Pallibarta.* The river Ichhāmatī, on which the town stands, is here spanned by a pontoon bridge constructed in 1863. A Union Committee was established at Bangāon in 1911-12.

Bangāon Subdivision.—Western subdivision of the district lying between 22° 52′ and 23° 26′ N. and between 88° 40′ and 89° 2′ E., with an area of 649 square miles. It is bounded on the east by the Jessore subdivision; on the south by the 24-Parganas (Bārāsat and Basirhāt subdivisions); on the west by the Rānāghāt and Sadar subdivisions of Nadiā; and on the north by the Chuādāngā subdivision of Nadiā and the

Jhenida subdivision of Jessore. The land is comparatively high and contains no marshes, but there are a number of small lakes, or *baors*, which mark the channels of extinct rivers. The river Ichhāmatī traverses the subdivision from north to south and is a deep stream navigable throughout the year. The other chief rivers are the Betna and Jamunā, which have now almost completely silted up, rendering the adjoining country very unhealthy. Its population in 1911 was 306,984, and it is the most sparsely inhabited part of the district, having only 473 persons to the square mile.

Bara Bazar.—A village in the Jessore subdivision situated 10 miles north of Jessore. It contains a sub-registry office, and also the ruins of some buildings and several old tanks (one of great size), which are ascribed to Khānja Alī, who is said to have halted here on his way to the Sundarbans. The traditions of the Nawapāra family, however, attribute these remains to one of their ancestors Rājā Rām Chandra Khān, who is said to have been a favourite of Mān Singh and to have held high office under him. He acquired the zamīndāri of Muhammadpur and made his head-quarters at Bara Bazar, but his grandson Kamal Nārāyan Rai removed the seat of the family to Bodhkhāna, 12 miles to the south-west.

Barkāliā or Kāliā.—A village in the Narāil subdivision situated about 10 miles south of Lakshmīpāsā on the Kāligangā river. It contains a police-station, dispensary, sub-registry office and a flourishing High school. There is an association here, known as the Kālia Young Men's Association, which maintains a small library: its object is to help the poor. The people, who are mostly Baidyas by caste, have taken full advantage of the educational facilities afforded by Government; even 20 years ago, some fifty graduates in arts, law and medicine, many of whom practised elsewhere, had their homes here. The origin of this place is said to have been connected with the fact that the south of the district used to be liable to the attacks of the Maghs, and the western and north-western to the ravages of the Marāthās. To escape from these dangers, a number of respectable families sought an inaccessible spot, where they could live at peace undisturbed by Magh or Marāthās, and established themselves at Kāliā, which was then, as shown in Rennell's map, in the midst of a marsh. Many of the officials and people employed in the Jessore offices and courts belong to this village, to which they return in the Durgā Pujā, when boat races are a favourite pastime.

Basundia or Basantia.—A village in the Jessore subdivision situated on the Bhairab, about 12 miles east of Jessore. Being the point nearest to Jessore to which boats of

large size can be navigated, it may be said to serve as a port to that town. It has a considerable trade in sugar and rice, and there is a good deal of traffic on the road between it and Jessore.

Bodhkhāna. – See Gadkhāli.

Bidyānandakāti.—A village situated 24 miles south of Jessore and 4 miles west of Keshabpur. It contains a large tank or artificial lake, measuring 2,358 feet by 1,062 feet, which is said to have been excavated by Khānja Alī and is called after him Khānja Alī's *dighi*. "This," it is said, "is not surprising when it is remembered that he is the patron saint of the neighbouring villages, to whom is due the first milk of the cow, and in whose honour an annual *melá* or fair is still held on the southern bank of the *dighi* on the anniversary of his death on the full moon of *Phalgun* or *Chaitra*, in which the Holi festival takes place. At one time he was held in so great a veneration, that no one, Hindu or Muhammadan, would construct a masonry work at Bidyānandakāti without adding a brick to the structure erected to his memory on the bank of the tank."* As, however, the tank, like other tanks in the neighbourhood which are also ascribed to him, is longest from north to south, as is the case with tanks excavated by Hindus, the tradition is open to doubt. The tank was formerly supplied with fresh water from the Bhadra, with which it is connected by a channel on its north-east corner, but it has now almost silted up.

Numerous legends are current in the neighbourhood regarding the tank. One runs as follows:—Khānja Alī had nearly completed in a single night the excavation of six score and six tanks, of which this was one. The Hindu god Krishna, jealous of his achievements and of the influence he would thus acquire over his votaries, imitated the voice of a cock and announced the approach of dawn. This made the Muhammadan saint desist from his labours and return to Bágherhāt, where, finding it to be still midnight, he executed before dawn the works which are still associated with his name. According to another legend, Khānja Alī was interrupted in the course of the excavation by the river Bhadra, which rising till it overflowed the high banks of the tank, implored him to desist, as its water would be considered impure when the tank was completed. The saint thereupon cut the channel already alluded to. A third legend again attributes the interruption to the discovery of a *yogi* buried in the earth near the channel, which frightened the diggers so much that they left the work unfinished.

* Rās Bihāri Bose, *The Ruins near Bidyānandakāti*, Mookerjee's Magazine, 1873.

The tank is believed to be a repository of treasure. It is said that as long as there was free communication with the river, gold mohurs and various other articles used to float on the surface and go in and out with the ebb and flow of the tide. When in process of time the water became shallow, the cupidity of the people was aroused. Two great earthen jars filled with gold coins were then seen to issue from the middle of the tank, and cutting a passage in its bank near the south-eastern corner glide rapidly through it till they disappeared in the river. In proof of this fact, the villagers point to a gap still existing which is called *chhenrākonā*, *i.e.*, the torn corner.

About a hundred yards north of the tank there are several brick-kilns, the tops of which are just visible above the surface. The bricks, which appear to have been cut and not moulded, are generally thinner and smaller than those made at the present day. No one ventures to remove them for fear of incurring the vengeance of the dead; and stories are told of the evil fate of those who have tried to do so. In the neighbourhood are mounds of earth at varying distances, the intervening spaces being under cultivation, which may be the remains of old roads that have been cut into for the purposes of cultivation. An old road in fair preservation runs through the village along the river bank, and there are traces of a similar road, probably a continuation of the first, also running along the bank of the river, and bounding the village towards the north and the east. It has been suggested that this was originally not a road, but a fortification intended to protect the place from invasion, or an embankment to check the encroachments of the river. The position of the village, surrounded by the river, also supports the belief that it was originally a fortified position. Further, "the existence of numerous tanks and roads, and the discovery of bricks underground in the vicinity, seems to show that the chief who established his fort at Bidyānandakāti held sway over a rich and flourishing community. From the direction of the tanks it may be safely presumed that this community consisted wholly of Hindus."*

Chānchrā.—A village in the Jessore subdivision situated a mile south of Jessore and included in the municipal area. It contains the palace (*rājbāri*) of the old Rājās of Chānchrā or Jessore, which once had a rampart and fosse surrounding it, of which the ruins are still traceable. Near the palace is a large tank, dug by one of the ancestors of the Rājā's family, and called

*Rās Bihāri Ghose, *The Ruins near Bidyānandakāti*, Mookerjee's Magazine, 1873.

the Chor-mārā, or thief-beating tank. It is said that the jail where the Rājās confined malefactors was adjacent to it, and that the tank takes its name from this circumstance. The village also contains a temple of Dasha Mahāvidyā, which is now in ruins.

The Rājās of Chānchrā trace their origin to Bhabeswar Rai, a soldier in Khān-i-Azim's army, who received four *parganas*, viz., Saiyadpur, Ahmadpur, Murāgāchhā, and Malikpur, out of the territories taken from Rājā Pratāpāditya. Bhabeswar died in 1588 A.D. (995 B.S., or 997 A.H.), and was succeeded by Mahtāb Rām Rai (1588 to 1619). During Mān Singh's war with Pratāpāditya, he gave assistance to the Musalmān troops, and retained possession of the four *parganas* made over to his predecessor. During the last seven years of his life, however, he had to pay revenue on account of his lands, which apparently had not before been assessed. This was during the rule of Islām Khān, Governor of Bengal; and here there is collateral evidence in favour of the family history. The next successor, Kandarpa Rai, held possession of the estates from 1619 to 1649 A.D., during which time he succeeded in acquiring *parganas* Dantiā, Khāliskhālī, Bāghmārā, Salīmābād and Shāhujiālpur, extending his estates south westward from Saiyadpur.

Kandarpa's successor, Manohar Rai, who succeeded in 1649 and lived till 1705 A.D., is looked upon as the principal founder of the family. The estate, when he inherited it, was of moderate dimensions, but when he died, it had become by far the largest in the neighbourhood, owing to the acquisition of the following *parganas*:—Rāmchandrapur, in 1682 A.D.; Husainpur, in 1689; Rangdiā and Rahimābād, in 1691; Chingutiā, in 1690; Yusafpur, in 1696; Malai, Sobnāli and Sobna, in 1699; and Sāhos, in 1703; besides other smaller *parganas*, viz., Tālā Phaluā, Srīpad Kabirāj, Bhātlā, Kalikātā, etc. Manohar Rai is said to have acquired most of the *parganas* by paying the arrears due on them when their actual proprietors made default in payment of the revenue, and by engaging to pay the assessment himself in future. After Manohar's death, Krishna Rām held the estate up till 1729, and added to it Maheshwarpāsā and Raimangal, in the same way as his predecessor had acquired his neighbours' property. Some smaller *parganas*, including Bāzitpur, were acquired about this time by purchas from the Rājā of Nadiā. The next heir was Sukh Deb Rai who was induced by Manohar's widow to divide the estate into a three-quarters (twelve annas) and a one-fourth (four annas) share, the latter of which he gave to his brother Syām Sundar

In 1745, Sukh Deb was succeeded in the three-quarters or twelve annas share by Nīlkānt, who held it till 1764; but the quarter or four annas share was left without an heir in 1756 or 1758, Syām Sundar and his infant son having died.

The three-quarters share (generally called the Yusufpur estate, that being the name of the chief *pargana* in it) was inherited in 1764 by Srīkānt Rai. At the time of the Permanent Settlement he lost *pargana* after *pargana*, until his family, having nothing left, were forced to fall back on the bounty of Government. Srīkānt died in 1802, and his son Bānikānt, having succeeded by means of a suit in regaining that part of the ancestral property which lay within the Saiyadpur *pargana*, gave up his pension and became once more a landholder. Bānikānt died in 1817, and the Court of Wards greatly increased the value of the estate for his son Baradākānt, whilst a minor. In 1823, Government restored to him the confiscated *pargana* of Sāhos; and subsequently bestowed upon him the title of Rājā Bahādur, in recognition of his position and the services rendered by him during the Mutiny. He died in 1880 and was succeeded by his three sons, Gyanadākānt, Manadākānt and Hemadākānt. The title of Rājā, which is not officially recognized as hereditary, was conferred on the eldest, Gyanadākānt, in 1888.

The estate, or rather a residue of it, is now held by Kumār-Satishkānt, Kshirodākānt and Hemadākānt. They used to be the proprietors of *pargana* Saiyadpur and Imādpur, extending over 99,434 acres, with a revenue of Rs. 1,32,101 and paying a Government revenue of Rs. 55,317-9-8; but they had to part with their entire interest in *pargana* Saiyadpur some time ago, and they have now got only a fractional interest in *pargana* Imādpur. The only property of any importance now held by them is a 10 annas 8 pies interest in *pargana* Sāhos in the Khulnā district. The assets of their shares in this *pargana* amount to Rs. 21,114, and they have to pay a revenue of Rs. 2,431-15-8.

Chaugāchhā.—A village in the Jessore subdivision situated on the Kabadak, 16 miles north-west of Jessore. The village contains a police-station and District Board bungalow, and an important *hāt* is held twice a week. It appears as a prominent place on Rennell's map, and its importance at the end of the eighteenth century is attested by the fact that a road to Chaugāchhā was one of the chief lines of communication which the Collector proposed for construction in August 1800. A bridge across the Kabadak was constructed here about 1850 by the then Magistrate Mr. Beaufort; but sufficient waterway was not left, and it was swept away about three years after it was built. The village is

one of the centres of the sugar trade of the district. Messrs. Gladstone, Wyllie & Co. established a refinery here, but it did not succeed and passed into the hands of Messrs. Newhouse of Kotchāndpur. Mr. McLeod used to reside in the house attached to the sugar factory, and a large quantity of indigo was grown by him. There used also to be a large indigo factory here, built by a Mr. Bucksworth, which was closed over 30 years ago, and also a small indigo factory built by a rich merchant called Nilkant Pare. One day, when Nilkant was bringing back from Calcutta Rs. 14,000, the produce of his indigo sales, he was attacked by dacoits, who robbed him of all. Nilkant never recovered from his loss, and eventually sold the factory to Tārini Charan Ghose, a zamīndār resident in the village and formerly Government Pleader at Krishnagar.

Dhulgrām.—A village in the Narāil subdivision situated on the left bank of the Bhairab, 5 miles south of the Abhayanagar police outpost. It contains the residence of the Mitra family which has built a series of temples on the bank of the Bhairab. Owing, however, to the encroachments of the river, most of these temples have been washed away.

Gadkhāli.—A village in the Jessore subdivision situated two miles from the Jhingergāchhā railway station. It formerly contained a police-station and sub-registry office, which have been removed to Jhingergāchha. At Bodhkhāna, 4 miles north of Gadkhāli, a fair is held annually immediately before that at Trimohini. There are at Bodhkhāna the remains of a ditch and ramp, the *garh*, as it is called, of an old zamīndār's family. This house was probably that of Kamal Nārāyan Rai, an ancestor of the Nawapārā family, who is known to have made his head-quarters here.

Jessore.—Head quarters station of the district situated on the Bhairab river, with a station on the Eastern Bengal State Railway, 75 miles from Calcutta. It contains a population, according to the census of 1911, of 8,911 persons, of whom 5,565 are Hindus, 3,202 are Muhammadans, and 143 are Christians The town was constituted a municipality in 1864; besides Jessore proper, the villages of Purāna Kasbā, Bāghchar, Sankarpur, Gope Barandi and Chānchrā (*q.v.*) lie within municipal limits. The town contains the usual public offices, criminal, revenue and civil courts found at a district head-quarters, a district jail, a High school, a dispensary and a town hall. The chief educational institutions are the Zilā School, which is maintained by Government, and the Sammilani School teaching up to the Entrance standard, which was started in 1888 by some private gentlemen

and is managed by trustees. The town has not a large trade, but is the head-quarters of three banking concerns, viz., the Jessore Loan Company, which was started in 1876, the Trading and Banking Company and the United Bank. Recently a factory for the manufacture of combs, buttons and mats has been established near the railway station: the factory belongs to a company, composed of Indian gentlemen, which was formed in 1909. There are four printing presses in the town, of which two do job work, while the other two publish newspapers. The Hindu Patrika Press publishes two monthly journals, the *Hindu Patrika* in Bengali and the *Brahmachāri* in English: the Jessore Patrika Press publishes a Bengali weekly called the *Jessore Patrika.*

There are no remains of archæological interest, with the exception of the shrines of two *pīrs* or Musalmān saints—Gharib Shāh and Bahrām Shāh. The shrine of the first is just beside the Collectorate; the other is a little distance off in the direction of the cemetery. Legend relates that Gharib and Bahrām Shāh were companions of Khānja Alī, and that, when he was marching southwards to the Sundarbans, he sent them ahead to prepare food for him at Jessore. When he arrived, it was not ready, and he therefore left them behind when he went on. As they were, like Khānja Alī himself, men of great piety endowed with Divine power, people resorted to them, and to this day the people of Jessore visit their shrines with votive offerings.

Among modern buildings may be mentioned a church of the Church of England, which was opened in 1843. Government having given the labour of the prisoners in the jail, the cost of erection was only Rs. 3,467, which was raised by subscriptions among the residents and indigo planters of the district. Mr. Benthall, the then Judge, was the moving spirit in the matter, and along with others subscribed largely to the building, which, when erected, received the name of Christ Church. About 1846 a parsonage was built (also by subscription among the residents and planters) at a cost of Rs. 7,064, prison labour apparently being again used. Mr. J. Foy, the first clergyman (Additional Clergy Society), occupied this house from his arrival in December 1846 till he left in December 1856. The church was apparently a bare place when he first came—little but walls and seats; but in 1848 a clock purchased by subscriptions was placed in the tower, and in 1853-54, mainly through his exertions and the subscriptions of the residents in the district, a chancel was built, an altar was set up and decorated, stained windows were put in, etc. In 1854 a public library was started, which

is still in existence. It has recently been transferred from the Municipal Office buildings to the Town Hall, which was built in 1909. There are two cemeteries near the European quarters one of which is old, while the other was described in 1870 as new, so that it is now over 40 years old.

Near Murali, two miles from the station, is a temple containing an idol of Raghunāth with an endowment, which is spent in the maintenance of the temple and the worship of the idol, and in feeding travellers and religious mendicants. The endowment was made in 1813 by Krishna Dās Brajabāsi, who devoted the rental of five villages to that purpose and handed the management to two persons of his own caste. After his death in 1126 the trustees set up a forged will to prove that the estate had been conveyed to them for their own benefit and not for pious uses. The fraud was discovered, and for long afterwards the trust was managed by the Collector, but eventually it was made over to a committee appointed by the caste to whom the idol appertains.

When British rule began, the head-quarters were at Murali, where there was a factory, which Mr. Henckell, the first Judge and Magistrate, made his residence. About 1790 the head-quarters were transferred by his successor, Mr. Rocke, to the town of Jessore, which was then known as Kasbā (meaning the city) or Sāhibganj ; the last name is no longer used, but the town is still sometimes called Kasbā-Jessore. The derivation of the word Jessore is doubtful. According to General Cunningham, the name means a bridge and "shows the nature of the country which is so completely intersected by deep watercourses that, before the construction of the present roads and bridges the chief communication was by boats." * The basis of his theory is not known to the compiler of this volume, nor is it understood how Jessore could mean a bridge. Popular tradition states that the name is a corruption of Yasohara, meaning the depriver of glory, and that this name was given to the capital of Bikramaditya in the Sundarbans, which was so magnificent that it eclipsed the capital of Gaur. The name, it is said, was first given to Iswarīpur in Khulnā, which was known as Jasor-Iswarīpur and was subsequently transferred to this town. This tradition cannot, however, be credited, for, as stated in Chapter II, the name Jasor was given to this part of the country before the time of Bikramāditya.

The town is known to have been an unhealthy one for more than a century. In 1800 the station was described as

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* *Ancient Geography of India (1871), p. 502.*

"all jungle trees and bamboos," with its bazar and roads covered with unhealthy vegetation, and letters of other periods say the same We find that in 1806 Mr. Willock, the Collector who had succeeded Mr. R. Thackeray (the father of the novelist), had to leave suddenly in bad health, only to die at Jessore next year. His successor, Mr. Parker, also had to leave thrice on account of ill-health, and also died here in 1809. The Bhairab river was then, as now, a source of malaria, for it was almost dry in the hot season, and the place retained for a very long time its reputation as an unhealthy station. Sir James Westland, writing in 1870, stated:—"Its character in this respect has been entirely changed since Mr. Beaufort, the Magistrate, about 1854 supplied it with an efficient system of drainage, the first great step in its sanitary improvement." This appears to have been an optimistic view, for the station is now as unhealthy as ever owing to the deterioration of the Bhairab. This river used to have a rapid flow and was the source from which the inhabitants got their drinking water-supply, besides carrying off the drainage of the town. Now, however, owing to the collection of silt in its bed, the water is almost completely stagnant; and into this stagnant water there still passes the drainage of one side of the town. The drainage of the other side runs off towards the Harina *Bil.*

For the improvement of the Bhairab a number of schemes have been suggested, *e.g.* (1) to convert the Bhairab into a lake by placing a dam across it below the town, (2) to drain it entirely, (3) to introduce a fresh supply of water into its bed from the Chītrā by means of a cut, (4) to divert the whole of the drainage of the town into the Harina *Bil.* Regarding the first scheme the Sanitary Commissioner remarked in 1892:—"The proposal to bund up the river and turn it into a lake is in my opinion highly objectionable. From a sanitary point of view the lake, if formed, would not only raise the level of the sub-soil water, thus causing an increase of malarial fever, but would soon be filled with noxious water plants and be a greater nuisance than ever." Regarding the other three schemes his successor wrote next year:—"The first suggestion is impracticable. The second is too costly, and would in all probability fail. The third scheme necessitates the rearrangement of the existing drainage scheme and the construction of a large kutcha drainage system on the *bil* side of the town. A point to be considered with the construction of a long and elaborate system of kutcha drainage is the large amount of money which will have to be spent yearly in cleaning out the drains. Again, if this clearance

is not carried out under skilled supervision, there will be a great liability that the levels will be disarranged and the drains made useless. The only remedy for this appears to be the construction of masonry drains, but the cost would be very heavy—probably prohibitive."

The latest scheme is to introduce a flow of water during the rains from the Mātābhānga in the Nadia district. The progress of this scheme has been stayed for fuller enquiries about its probable effects.

At present, part of the town only is provided with a filtered water-supply, but a scheme for supplying drinking water to the entire town has been recently taken in hand by the Municipality at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,54,000. Of this sum Government contributes Rs. 54,000, besides a rent-free grant of 14 acres of *Khās Māhal* land; the rest of the amount is to be raised by a loan of Rs. 65,000 and from private subscriptions: Government has already given a loan of Rs. 60,000 and a further loan of Rs. 5,000 is being proposed. The supply of water is to be obtained from two big tanks excavated for the purpose. The water from the tanks will flow through floating arms to a pump well, from which it will be raised by an oil engine and a centrifugal pump to two unfiltered water tanks placed on the first floor of the engine house, which will contain between them 15,000 gallons. From these tanks the water is to pass through a set of three mechanical filters, each capable of filtering 2,000 gallons per hour; so that when all three are working, the total supply can be filtered in 6⅔ hours, or, when only two are in use, in 10 hours. After filtration, the water will gravitate to an under-ground reservoir, whence it is to be pumped a second time to the service reservoir, which is a steel tank situated on the top of the engine house, the draw-off level being 28 feet above ground level. The pumps and engines are to be in duplicate, the pumps being run off a counter-shaft in such a way that any pump can be worked by either engine, so as to furnish a safeguard against a breakdown. The filtered and unfiltered water pumps can each raise 6,000 gallons per hour, equal to the maximum rate at which the filters can work. The filters will be placed in a special room forming an annexe to the engine house. To ensure a sufficient supply of water throughout the year, it has been decided to drain rain water falling on an area of 1,000 square feet into the tanks. The total length of pipes to be laid out will be 34,448 feet or a little over 6½ miles, and 53 hydrants are to be placed at convenient places in the town.

The existing system of drainage is defective. There are about 46 miles of kutcha and pucca drains for carrying rain water, partly into the river Bhairab and partly into the Harina *Bil* south of the Chanchra-Bagchar Road. In the rainy season the *Bil* floods up through the culverts under the railway into the lowlying portion of the town, and thus renders drainage practically ineffectual for some time in the year. The current of the Bhairab, moreover, is not strong enough to carry off within a sufficiently short time the rain water discharged into it. The result is that during the rainy season rain water soaks into the ground and makes the entire area damp and unhealthy; while the drains do not carry off sullage water, which either sinks into the ground in the immediate neighbourhood of the houses or runs into tanks by surface flow. A scheme has recently been prepared for removing sullage water from the vicinity of inhabited areas, for keeping the tanks and wells free from pollution, and for carrying off rain water more effectually, either into the *bil* or the river, by means of a system of open drains.

Jessore Subdivision.—Head-quarters subdivision of the district with an area of 748 square miles. The subdivision is an alluvial tract sloping from north-west to south-east, through the centre of which the river Bhairab flows. This river and the other streams traversing the subdivision have now silted up except in the lower reaches; the country between them contains some large marshes, and the whole tract is very unhealthy. At the census of 1901 the area of the subdivision was 889 square miles with a population of 561,242, but owing to changes of jurisdiction it has now (1911) been reduced to 748 square miles with a population of 462,305 persons, representing 618 persons to the square mile.

Jhenida.—The head-quarters station of the subdivision of that name, situated on the river Nabagangā, 28 miles north of Jessore. Population (1911) 1,022. It is nearly 23 miles distant from the nearest railway station, Chuādāngā on the Eastern Bengal State Railway, with which it is connected by a metalled road; there is a regular ticca *gāri* service between Jessore and Jhenida, carrying passengers daily from Jhenida to Jessore and back. The Nabagangā used to be the principal channel of communication between Jhenida and the outside world, but it has silted up and is now practically a sheet of stagnant water dignified by the name of a river.

Jhenida appears to have been formerly the head-quarters of the Naldangā Rājā's zamīndāri of Mahmūdshāhi; and it was, under Warren Hastings' police arrangements, a *chauki* subordinate

to the thāna of Bhushnā. In 1786 Jhenida was the head-quarters of the Collectorate of Mahmūdshāhi, but next year it was absorbed in the adjoining district of Jessore, and it became a police thāna about 1793. The indigo disturbances of 1860-61 led to the establishment of the subdivisional head-quarters here in 1862, the Jhenida subdivision till then being for the most part within the subdivision of Māgurā.

Jhenida is the head-quarters of a Union Committee established in 1911. The principal public and *quasi*-public offices and institutions are:—(1) The subdivisional office established in 1861-62. (2) The Civil Courts consisting of the Courts of the first and second Munsifs of Jhenida. The Munsif's court was first established here in 1861; but previous to that year the Munsif of Māgurā was designated the Munsif of Jhenida. In 1864 the Munsif's court was abolished, but it was re-established in 1871; there also used to be a Court of Small Causes, but it was abolished in 1891. (3) The sub-registry office. (4) The police-station. (5) The post and telegraph offices. (6) The dispensary established in 1864, which is supported by public subscriptions and grants by the District Board. (7) The office of the Local Board formed in 1887. (8) The High English school established in 1878, which is maintained by public subscriptions and a Government grant (9) The *Madrasa*, which has been recently established. (10) The Christ Church Mission house. Not far from the courts there is an inspection bungalow belonging to the District Board.

Jhenida has a considerable bazar, and a little distance to the west of the bazar is Hātkholā, where a bi-weekly *hāt* is held every Sunday and every Thursday. There is a temple of Kālī here, which is maintained by contributions consisting of a handful of everything brought for sale in the *hāt*. A little to the west of the latter, in the village of Chākla, there is a large *tahsīl* cutcherry of the Narāil zamīndārs. In the adjoining village of Chuādāngā there is a shrine of a godling called Pānchu-pānchui, of which Sir James Westland gives the following account:—"Pānchu-pānchui has the reputation of giving children to barren women, and on Tuesday, which is her *levèe* day, thirty or forty women may be seen visiting her. She lives in a small thatched hut, and her guardian is an old woman. The applicants address this old woman, and she retires behind a screen, whence some inarticulate sounds are then heard. The old woman then comes out and states the terms which Pānchu-pānchui has dictated as those on which she will accomplish the applicant's desire. The latter

goes away, and when a child is born to her, she returns with the offering—a two-anna piece, or a cloth, or a bowl of milk, etc.—which Pānchu-pānchui has demanded." The vicinity of Jhenida formerly bore a bad reputation for robberies and dacoities. A big tank, a mile or two from Jhenida, used to be a favourite spot for the perpetration of these outrages, and the tank still bears the suggestive names of Chakshukora (eye-gouging) and Maridhapa (jaw-squashing).

Jhenida Subdivision.—North-western subdivision of the district with an area of 616 square miles. It is bounded on the north and west by the Kusthiā and Chuādānga subdivisions of the Nadiā district; on the east by the Māgurā subdivision and by the Goalundo subdivision of Farīdpur; and on the south by the Sadar subdivision of this district. It is an alluvial plain, somewhat higher than the Jessore subdivision, traversed from north-west to south-east by the Kumār, Nabagangā and Chitrā rivers. Of these, the first is still navigable almost throughout the year, but the latter two have practically silted up; inundations from the Kumār still occur, but at rare intervals. The surface has been raised by the inundations of the distributaries of the Ganges till it is now beyond the reach of the ordinary floods, and consequently it no longer receives the deposits of silt which formerly enriched it. At the census of 1901, the subdivision had an area of 475 square miles with a population of 304,799, but the Kālīganj thāna with an area of 141 square miles and a population of 81,285 was subsequently added to it, so that its area is now 616 square miles and its population 362,518 representing 589 persons per square mile.

Jhingergāchhā.—A village in the Jessore subdivision situated 9 miles west of Jessore. There is a station here on the Eastern Bengal State Railway, and the river Kabadak is spanned by a suspension bridge, the history of which has already been given in Chapter IX. The place contains a thana, a sub-registry office and a District Board bungalow. A cattle market is held, and it is an important centre for the export trade in sugar and rice. An indigo factory was established here by Mr. Jenkins about 1800; either this factory, or more probably another which subsequently took its place, came into the hands of a Mr. Mackenzie, who died about 1865. He did much to develop Jhingergāchhā, and established a *hāt* which is called after him Mackenzieganj.

Kāliā.—See Barkāliā.

Kālīganj.—A village in the Jessore subdivision, situated 18 miles north of Jessore, at the point where the Jhenida road

crosses the Chitrā; the latter is spanned by a bridge built about 1853. It contains a police-station, sub-registry office and District Board bungalow, and has a considerable trade in crude sugar and rice. The sugar produced in the vicinity of Kālīganj is considered to be of the best quality in the district and fetches the highest price. Refineries have been established near it at the villages of Singha Mustafapur, Bāruipārā and Nagar Chaprail on the Chitrā.

Keshabpur. -A village in the Jessore subdivision, situated on the Harihar river 21 miles south of Jessore. It contains a thāna, dispensary, sub-registry office and District Board bungalow; and it is an important trade centre, the river being at this place sufficiently deep to float vessels of about 500 maunds burden. At low tide in the cold season, however, the river is so shallow, that the merchants excavate rude docks opening into it, in which their vessels may lie when loading. The village is a seat of the import trade in rice and the export trade in molasses and chillies. It used to contain several *kārkhānās* or refineries, most of which are in the Calcutta Patti (*i.e.*, Calcutta street), the principal thoroughfare, which was so called from the number of Calcutta merchants who lived or had agencies in it. None of them, however, are at work and the manufacture of sugar in this neighbourhood is now confined to Srīganj, a suburb on the other side of the river. Keshabpur has one advantage over the other places in the sugar tract, viz., its proximity to the Sundarbans. The river Bhadra leads from it straight down to the Sundarbans forests, and by it cargoes of firewood were formerly brought up to be used in refining the sugar. It is probably to this circumstance that it owed its former prominence as a seat of manufacture. Quantities of earthen pots and vessels are made here for the collection of the juice of the date-palm and the preparation of crude sugar, and another local manufacture is brasswork. One-quarter of the town is inhabited by a settlement of Kaoras, who used to be employed as labourers by the refiners. These men have now adopted a new and, it is said, more lucrative occupation. They are employed to carry the dead bodies of wealthy Hindus to the banks of the Ganges for cremation and are paid high wages.

The town is entered on the Survey maps as Ganj-Keshabpur. Rennell's map of 1764-72 does not mark the place at all, but shows the whole region about it as a morass, called 'Barwanny.' Sir James Westland says:—"This name shows that he has been led into a mistake by the name Bāra-āni (twelve annas, *i.e.*, three-quarters), given to one of the shares of the Yusafpur

estate, within which the land lay; and as for the region being a morass, it is simply impossible, for only ten or fifteen years afterwards we find a European salt establishment at Chāpnagar eight miles south-east of Keshabpur, in the heart of Rennell's morass. Chāpnagar is now an insignificant place; and it is likely that Keshabpur would have been chosen in place of it, if it had anything approaching to the prominence it has now." The village contains two large bazars, called respectively Bāra-āni (twelve annas) and Chār-āni (four annas) in allusion to the two shares of the old Yusufpur estate within whose respective limits they are situated.

Kotchāndpur.--A town in the Jhenida subdivision situated on the Kabadak, 26 miles north-west of Jessore, and 18 miles south-west of Jhenida. It is connected with Kālīganj on the Jessore-Jhenida road by a metalled road. Population (1911) 8,076. It is the centre of the sugar manufacture and molasses trade of Jessore, and has a distinctly urban aspect, with its factory chimneys and streets lined with masonry buildings. Its roads also must be the envy of less fortunate municipalities, for they are metalled with the broken pots in which *gur* is brought to the town.

Chāndpur is the proper name of the place, and the prefix "Kot" is apparently due to the fact that, under the Mughal Government, it was a police-station, which was practically a military stronghold. Under British rule, it was constituted a thāna in 1814 or 1815; in 1861 it was made the head-quarters of a subdivision as a result of the indigo riots. The site selected was at first a plot of land between Kotchāndpur and the adjacent village of Sulaimānpur, but subsequently this was abandoned in favour of a place on the high bank of Kabadak, west of the town, where a masonry cutcherry building was erected. The subdivision was abolished in the re-arrangement made in 1863, and the building was subsequently utilized as a school house. In the meantime, between 1861 and 1863, Kotchāndpur and its suburbs were formed into a Chaukīdāri Union, which in 1883 was converted into a municipality, the limits of which not only included Kotchāndpur, but also the neighbouring villages of Bara Bāmandaha, Bhawānīpur, Dudshārā and Sulaimānpur. The town has a Bench of Municipal Magistrates, a sub-registry office, a thāna, a postal-telegraph office, a dispensary, a High school and a District Board bungalow. An important *hāt* is held every Sunday and Thursday, which is attended by people for many miles round. It is most brisk during the sugar season, various kinds of merchandise, vegetables and fish being brought to the

market for sale. Recently also a considerable trade in paddy and rice has sprung up, and boats laden with paddy and rice come from Backergunge to this place, from which the grain is sent to different places in the interior.

The market is described as follows by Sir James Westland:—"Large quantities of cloth are brought, chiefly from Bara Bāmandaha, a suburb where most of the dwellers are weavers, and from Maheshpur; trinkets of all sorts—bracelets, bangles, bead, necklaces, and mirrors; a large display of hookahs, and near them a range of tobacco sellers; vegetables in profusion; oil from the neighbouring village of Balahar and other places; *pān* leaf and lime and betel-nut brought up from the south of the district; earthenware of all sorts, for which there is a great demand, since almost every one in this part of the country has something to do with the sugar manufacture; and the fish-sellers have also a separate quarter for themselves. All these are out in the square and in the roads round it; and at the same time, in the shops which flank them, a busy trade is going on among the sellers of grain and the buyers of *gur;* and add to the whole an indefinite number of spectators, and everybody (buyer, or seller, or spectator) speaking and clamouring altogether—a hubbub and turmoil which one can hear a mile or two away."

The commercial importance of Kotchāndpur dates back about three-quarters of a century and is entirely due to the sugar trade, which, however, was formerly much brisker than it is at present. In 1874-75 there were 63 *kārkhānās* or refineries besides a large factory owned by Messrs. Newhouse. The latter was worked on European lines, most of the refining being effected by steam according to the turbine or centrifugal process. The amount of sugar manufactured in that year was 156,475 maunds valued at Rs. 9,38,850. In 1889 there were 78 refineries, great and small, which produced 175,000 maunds of sugar and yielded, according to the income-tax returns, a profit of 8 or 9 lakhs. In 1901, however, there were only 47 factories at work, and the number fell in 1908-09 to 32. The European refineries have been closed and others do not work regularly; but in spite of this, it is reported that about 100,000 maunds of sugar are manufactured yearly in Kotchāndpur and its neighbourhood; this however is all unrefined sugar.

Lakshmīpāsā.—A village in the Narāil subdivision, situated 10 miles east of Narāil on the right bank of the Nabagangā at the point where it flows into the Bankana. It has a large bazar and a considerable trade in rice, pulses and oilseeds. It

is also the head-quarters of the Naldi zamīndāri and the Lohāgara police-station, and contains a sub-registry office, a postal-telegraph office and a High school Close to the bazar there is a temple dedicated to Kālī, which contains an idol, to which the following legend attaches: A hundred years ago, or more, there lived here a pious blacksmith, who used frequently to make images of Kālī and after worshipping them to cast them into the river, according to the ceremony of *bisarjan*. One night Kālī appeared to him and told him that she had determined permanently to take up her abode with him, so he gave her a house, and her fame went abroad. Not very long afterwards a masonry temple was built for her by one of the Rānīs of the Naldi family. To this temple people come to worship and make offerings of goats, especially on Tuesdays and Saturdays. There is a family of priests in charge of the temple, who divide the offerings among themselves. The temple consists of a one-storied brick building with a *nātmandīr* in front.

A number of Kulin Brāhmans live in Lakshmīpāsā and in the adjacent villages of Kāsipur and Jaypur, who take much pride in their high birth. Regarding this colony the Collector reports:—"Kulinism is in full force here. There is only a limited number of families who can find bridegrooms and brides for their daughters and sons; hence there are many old women who cannot get married at all, and several sisters are sometimes married to one bridegroom, who rarely, if ever, visits them. With the spread of English education, however, this practice is gradually dying out." Lakshmīpāsā is also the home of a number of educated persons, pleaders and Government servants.

Lohāgarā.—A village in the Narāil subdivision, situated on the Nabagangā in close proximity to Lakshmīpāsā. It contains a large bazar and is a centre of the trade in rice, pulses and jute. It contains a High school (unaided), which was established by Rai Jadu Nath Mazumdar Bahādur, Government Pleader at Jessore, and a dispensary called the Pitambar charitable dispensary; a road 10 miles long connects it with the subdivisional head-quarters at Narāil, and there is a steamer service of the India General and River Navigation Company between it and Khulnā.

Māgurā.—Head-quarters of the subdivision of that name, situated 17 miles east of Jhenida and 28 miles north of Jessore on the Nabagangā at the point where the Muchikhāli brings down the water of the Garai and the Kumār into it. Population (1911) 3,442. The town is enclosed by roads forming a quadrangle, in which lie the jail, the dispensary, the High English school, the

Munsifs' quarters, the subdivisional court, Local Board office, a sub-registry office and District Board bungalow besides 4 tanks, one of which is reserved for drinking purposes. There are also two printing presses, of which one publishes a Bengali weekly called the *Kalyāni*. A bazar belonging to the Shikdar Bābus of Abhaypur lies on the east and south, and a prosperous *hāt*, which belongs to the Rājā of Naldāngā, is held, on Thursdays and Sundays, at a little distance to the west.

Māgurā was made a subdivisional head-quarters in 1845, not on account of its being a trade centre, but because dacoity was frequent in the neighbourhood, and Māgurā being situated at the confluence of the rivers was the most convenient place from which to deal with it. The first Subdivisional Officer was Mr. Cockburn, who built a fine residence for himself and then commenced the construction of a road from Māgurā to Jhenida. The next building erected was the jail, which was begun in 1849 and completed in 1856, while a hospital was constructed about 1853-54, chiefly by subscriptions given by the indigo planters. In 1858 it was found necessary to repair the embankment along the Nabagangā, for the water of the Muchikhāli was pouring into that river, and, breaking through at Kāsināthpur, was forming a new river southward. It was hoped in this way to save the Subdivisional Officer's house, but the villagers cut through the embankment for the purposes of irrigation and the current eroded the southern bank of the Nabagangā year by year. Between 1872 and 1874 the house disappeared into the river, and a new building had to be erected.

Māgurā Subdivision.—North-eastern subdivision of the district lying between 23° 16′ and 23° 41′ N. and between 89° 25′ and 89° 41′ E. with an area of 425 square miles. It is bounded on the south by the Narāil subdivision; on the west by Jhenida and Sadar subdivisions; and on the north and east by the Goalundo subdivision of the Farīdpur district. Like the rest of the district, it is a deltaic plain traversed from north-west to south-east by rivers, of which the Kumār, the Nabagangā and the Madhumatī are the most important. It is now beyond the reach of inundation with the exception of a tract along its eastern border lying between the Kumār and the Nabagangā on the one side and the Madhumatī on the other. Some shallow marshes make parts of this subdivision very unhealthy, and the Muhammadpur thāna has the evil reputation of having been the matrix of Burdwān fever. Its population declined from 277,381 in 1901 to 265,948 in 1911, when there were 626 persons to the square mile.

Maheshpur.—A town in the Bangāon subdivision, situated on the Kabadak river 25 miles north-west of Jessore. Population (1911) 4,211. The town rose to importance owing to its having good water communication with the Nadiā district, but the western branch of the Kabadak on which it stands has now silted up. It was constituted a municipality in 1869 and the area within municipal limits is 3 square miles. It contains a dispensary and a District Board bungalow.

Mahmūdpur.—See Muhammadpur.

Manirāmpur.—A village in the Jessore subdivision, situated 13 miles south of Jessore, on the Harihar, now a dried-up river. It contains a thāna, sub-registry office and a large tank dug 100 years ago or more by Rānī Kāsiswarī, a lady of the Rājā of Chānchrā's family; a market is held here twice a week on Mondays and Fridays. Khānpur, a large village, 3 miles from Manirāmpur, is said to be full of litigious Muhammadans, who date their local and domestic events by the *mukaddamas* or law suits in which they have been engaged and talk of the various hours of the day as 'the time for going to court,' 'the time for filing complaints,' etc.

Mirzānagar.—A village in the Jessore subdivision, situated half a mile from Trimohini on the road to Keshabpur. It was formerly the head-quarters of the district, being the seat of the *Faujdār* or Military Governor under the Mughal rule. It appears to have derived its name from Mīrzā Safshikan who died here in 1663, and was subsequently the head-quarters of Nurulla Khān, who held the office of *Faujdār* in 1696. It is probable that the village of Nurullapur to the east and Nurullanagar to the south were named after the latter *Faujdār* of whom an account will be found in Chapter II. Mīrzānagar is now only a small hamlet of Trimohini, but in 1815 the Collector wrote of it as one of the three largest towns in the district.

Archæologically, it is one of the most interesting places in Jessore. The rule of the *Faujdārs* is still commemorated by an old brick building called the Nawābbāri or Nawāb's palace. It is composed of two square courtyards separated by a high wall, with smaller walls on the north of the northern courtyard and on the south of the southern one. On the eastern side of both the squares is a double row of little arched dwellings, which were apparently the retainers' quarters; the only entrance to the courtyards is through them. On the western side of the northern square is a three-domed structure, which was the palace proper; the masonry is dilapidated, but the domed

roof still remains. In front of this, and within the courtyard, is a large masonry reservoir, which is said to have been a bath. The water was brought in by being pumped over the top of the retainers' houses, and could be discharged by a subterranean channel. The source of the water was the river Bhadra close by, which, though now closed, was a flowing river at the time when these buildings were occupied. The southern courtyard contains a few Musalmān tombs, and there are some more tombs outside the building.

About a mile due south of this building is what is called the Kilabāri or fort. It is a large area raised some eight or ten feet by earth excavated, in all probability, from a long and wide trench called the Moti Jhīl, which bounds it on the south. This raised area was, it is said, at one time surrounded by a wall, but no traces of it now remain. Its length is east and west, and the principal entrance to it was on the east. The entrance appears to have been fortified, for there used to be three cannon lying here. Two of them were taken away by Mr. Beaufort when he was Magistrate (1854) and, according to the inhabitants, one was converted into fetters for prisoners and the other used as a roller on the roads. A native gentleman at Jessore, however, told Sir James Westland that he had purchased one of them for Rs. 3, and would, if he liked, let him have it. The third gun is still lying in the field close by. There is, the villager say, some magic power in it which makes it refuse to be moved; according to them, three hundred convicts and an elephant once tried to raise it, but failed to move it. It is an iron gun, about five feet long, and composed of three or four concentric layers of metal.

Close by, outside the entrance, is a range of brick-built dark chambers, said to have been the prison-house. Two of the chambers have small wells in them, and on the outside of the building there is a large and deep well. Into these, it is said, malefactors were cast, and the inside was smoothly plastered over, so that they might have no chance of climbing up. Close to Trimohini bazar is what is probably another part of the same set of buildings, viz., the Imāmbāra, or prayer place. This is merely a wall on the top of an artificial mound.

Muhammadpur or Mahmūdpur—A village in the Māgurā subdivision, situated 14 miles south-east of Māgurā and about 2 miles from the right bank of the Madhumatī. It contains a police-station and sub-registry office. The proper name of the place is Mahmūdpur, and it was so called after Mahmūd Shāh, king of Bengal; the name Muhammadpur is only a modern designation.

It was the head-quarters of Sītārām Rai, whose history has been given in Chapter II; and when British rule began, it was a large town marked in big letters in Rennell's map as the capital of Bhushnā. Its decadence began with the outbreak in 1836 of an epidemic of fever, which subsequently spread over Jessore and the adjoining districts, and is now known as Burdwān fever. The ruins of old houses show how far Muhammadpur once extended, but it is now a small village, situated on part of an elevated rampart, north of the Rām Sāgar tank; only a few houses are scattered about in the space once occupied by the town. Formerly during the rains, large quantities of *hilsā* fish were exported to Calcutta packed with salt in earthenware jars. At that time the Madhumatī flowed immediately below the village, but a large alluvial accretion, 2 miles wide, has since formed between it and the river, and the trade in fish is now carried on at the neighbouring village of Oljani, which stands on the river side. In 1870 the two streams, the Madhumatī and the Barāsiā, bent towards each other near Muhammadpur, their loops meeting and forming a sort of curved cross. Since then the rivers have again separated, the Madhumatī having cut out a new bed for itself across the chord of the loop it formerly followed.

Popular tradition ascribes the foundation of the town to Sītārām Rai, whose adventures form the subject of numerous legends. According to one legend, Sītārām had a *tāluk* in Hariharnagar, a village on the left bank of the Madhumatī, and an estate in Syāmnagar close to the present Muhammadpur. One day, while visiting his estate, his horse's hoof stuck in the mud. He called some men to dig up the earth round it. A *trisul* or Hindu trident, then came to light, which on digging deeper was found to be the pinnacle of a temple, in which they discovered an idol of Lakshmī Nārāyan, the deity of Good Fortune, in the shape, of a round stone. Sītārām Rai forthwith proclaimed himself the favourite of the gods; and collecting the Uttar-rārhi Kāyasths, to which caste he belonged, he attacked the landholders of the neighbourhood, seized upon the whole of Bhushnā, and refused to pay revenue to the Governor of Bengal. Another version of the legend relates that Sītārām was sent by the Emperor of Delhi to coerce the twelve lords of the Sundarbans who had omitted to pay revenue. This duty he performed by ousting them, and installing himself in possession of their estates. He then refused to acknowledge the Nawāb's authority or to pay revenue to him, claiming to hold the lands from the Emperor direct.

The Nawāb made war upon him, and, his first attack being unsuccessful, sent his own son-in-law Abu Tarāb, but the latter was slain in battle by Menāhāti, a giant of Sītārām's own caste. Then the Nawāb sent a yet greater force under his best general, who succeeded in taking Menāhāti unawares. Menāhāti was bound by his captors, who kept him for seven days, belabouring him with sticks and hacking at him with swords. But Menāhāti had a wondrous drug buried under his skin, the virtue of which was such that, though it could not prevent him from feeling the pain of the blows, it rendered his flesh impenetrable to stick or sword. Wearied, however, with the continual assaults of his enemies, and willing rather to suffer death than a life of such pain, he at last confessed the secret of the drug. The influence of it could be got rid of only by taking him to the bank of the Rām Sāgār (a huge tank about to be described), plucking it from his arm, and throwing it into the water of the tank. This they did, and so Menāhāti died. After the loss of Menāhāti, Sītārām either surrendered or was captured by the Nawab, and, according to tradition, sucked poison from a ring and died. This legend does not agree with the authentic account of the Muhammadan historian which has been quoted in Chapter II.

The following is a description of the principal remains. The fort consists of a large quadrangle, which encloses most of Sītārām's buildings including his palace. It measures more than half a mile in each direction, and is surrounded by a moat, the earth of which was thrown inwards to raise the level of the quadrangle, forming a kind of ramp round it. On the east and north the moat has gradually silted up, but on the western side it is still full of water, while on the south it forms a fine sheet of water, a mile long. The chief entrance to the quadrangle is at the south-east corner. From here is seen, towards the north, a broad high ramp upon which stood the bazar, and at the southern end of which is the more meagre bazar of the present day. On the south, just outside the boundary of the quadrangle, is a great tank built by Sītārām and called after him Rām Sāgar. It is 450 to 500 yards long, and 150 to 200 yards broad; though 200 years old, it is still the finest reservoir in the district, and contains 18 or 20 feet of water. West of this is another tank, the Sukh Sāgar, or Lake of Pleasure, also excavated by Sītārām, with an island in the middle, on which he built a summer retreat.

Going north from the Rām Sāgar, along the eastern ramp of the quadrangle, we pass along what was Sītārām's bazar, the

ramp being made high and wide expressly for its accommodation. At the corner of this road we find the ruins of a brick built house, which is said to have been the old *kānungo* cutcherry attached to the zamīndāri. Proceeding along the road westward, towards the centre of the quadrangle, we pass between two tanks, which are so silted up that they are now jungly marshes. The southern one is called Padma or 'lotus tank,' and the northern one Chuna or 'lime tank,' because Sītārām prepared there the lime which he used for erecting his buildings. After passing these, we enter the central space which contains the ruins of Sītārām's greatness. The first building we come across is, however, not one of Sītārām's. It is the temple of Rāmchandra, which was erected about the year 1800 by the Nātor Rājā, whose family obtained the zamīndāri after it had passed out of Sītārām's hands. It is a two-storied building, with an arched verandah in front of each storey, and is of no particular interest. This building is on the south of the road, and on the north side in front of it is an open space, in which is the Dol Mandir, where the swinging festival at the full moon of Phālgun (the Dol Jātrā) is held. This is a building of Sītārām's time, shaped like a magnified sentry-box. It has a pointed arched roof, supported upon four columns placed square; these again elevated upon a pedestal of three tiers. Next we pass between two modern but ruined buildings, the Punya-ghar on the north, and the cutcherry of the Naldi estate on the south. The next building extends some little distance to the north of the road. The part of it nearest the road was the Chakla or circle cutcherry, where Sītārām made his collections and kept his zamīndāri accounts. The long extension northward was his jail, the place where he used to confine "during pleasure" those ryots who did not or could not pay up the demands made upon them. The walls of the cutcherry are still standing, but only the lines of the jail can be traced.

Along the western side of the cutcherry and jail extends a tank, at the further end of which are the ruins of Sītārām's own house, on one side of which is another tank—the Treasure Tank. The house itself is in total ruins, and inaccessible through the dense jungle which has overspread the quadrangle. The tank runs up close to the house, and a wall, the foundations of which are still traceable, ran round the tank on the east and north sides, enclosing it so as to form a private enclosure. This tank, it is said, was used as a treasury, the wealth that Sītārām accumulated being thrown into it until wanted. It is believed that much treasure remains buried at its bottom, beneath the growth of weeds which now fills it, and some evidence of the

truth of the tradition is cited. In 1841, one Rām Krishna Chakravarti was lucky enough to find a box containing five hundred gold mohurs, which he sold at Rs. 20 a piece; and about 1861, a boy of the Teli caste found in the tank a *ghati* (brass goblet) full of rupees. The Narāil zamīndārs, who for some time had possession of the temple lands at Muhammadpur, made diligent search, and tried to pump out the water, but popular belief declares that a spirit who dwells in the tank frustrated these impious efforts. Every night the water rose and refilled the tank, so that the quest for treasure had to be abandoned. Another tank, close by, which had a similar reputation was also unsuccessfully searched by the same zamīndārs.

The road, immediately after passing in front of the Chakla cutcherry, passes under the 'lion gate' (Singh Darwaza), which opened on to Sītārām's private buildings. This gate was once a large structure, but now only the arch of it remains. Adjoining the gate on the north is the Punya-ghar, *i.e.*, the place where the first collections of the year were made, a ceremony performed about Asārh (June-July) in each year at the principal collecting place of a zamīndāri. The lion gate leads to a small courtyard, with three buildings, one on each side, not much larger than ordinary native huts, but built of bricks. That facing the gate is the Mālkhānā or treasure room of Sītārām, and that on the left side is the guard-house. After Sītārām's time these two buildings continued to be used for the same purposes by the Rājās of Nator, but when their zamīndāri of Naldi was sold up (about 1800), the purchasers forcibly expelled their agents, and being obliged to erect a treasure-room for themselves, built the little one on the right hand side. Just south of the treasure-room there is a small gateway dating back to Sītārām's time, which leads to a small courtyard at the back of the treasure-room. The building facing the gateway on the west is a common Siva Mandir (temple of Siva) erected by the Nātor Rājās.

On the north, on the bank of the treasure-tank, there is a temple of Kālī, the smallest and the oldest of Sītārām's three temples. In form it resembles the Siva Mandir just mentioned—a masonry erection in the shape of a native hut, with a verandah in front. The deity worshipped here is a small idol, and is called Dasabhujā, the ten-armed, an epithet of the goddess Kālī. The temple once bore an inscription, which has either been stolen, or lies among the debris of the broken arches. The inscription, which was in Sanskrit, ran thus:—"In the year of the Saka era, earth-arms-tastes-earth, this temple, the abode of

Dasabhujá, was built by Sitarama Raya." The date is expressed in an enigmatical manner, "Earth" stands for one, for there is only one earth; "Arms" means two, for every one has two arms; "Tastes" stands for six, as according to the Hindus there are 6 tastes, viz., pungent, sour, saline, bitter, acid and sweet; "Earth," as above, represents one. The date is therefore 1 and 2 and 6 and 1, or as we write it, with the largest denomination first 1621 Saka, which began in April 1699 A.D.

Close to the Siva Mandir, on the west, there is another courtyard, the west and south sides of which are closed by the Toshākhānā, a long building now in ruins fronted with arches, in which the vessels were kept which had anything to do with the temple service, and probably profane vessels also. This courtyard is separated from the Treasure Tank by the temple of Lakshmi Nārāyan, an octagonal structure with two storeys and a flat roof which has no pretensions to architectural beauty. In the upper storey the god reposes at night; during the day he is brought down to the lower storey, where he remains upon a couch. In front of him, and upon the same couch, are two little idols, three or four inches high, called Govinda and Lakshmī, who are probably his attendants. It is agreed by everybody that the emblem of Lakshimī Nārāyan (which is very like an ordinary round-shaped stone) was found by Sītārām underground, and the legend already quoted states that the temple also was discovered by him buried in the earth; but an inscription, which has been either stolen or lost, ascribes its erection to him. It ran :—'For the abode of Lakshmī Nārāyan in the Saka year logic-eye-taste-earth, this temple was built by Sītārām for the beatitude of his father' The date is thus read: —" Logic" stands for six, as there are six systems of logic; "Eye" for two, as a man has only two eyes; "Taste" for six, as explained above; and "Earth", as shown above, stands for one. Reading this with the last figure (the thousands) first as we do in English, we have the date 1626 of the Saka era, which commenced in April 1704 A.D.

To the west, beyond the limits of the quadrangle, lies the village of Kanhayanagar. Buried amid its trees and houses there is a square of temples built by Sītārām, one of which, viz., the temple of Krishna built in 1703, is said to be the finest building of the sort in the district. It is described as follows by Sir James Westland :—" The building is on the west side of the square, and therefore fronting east. It is a square building with a tower, surmounted by a pointed dome, rising out of the middle of it. This tower is as high again as the building and is composed merely of the cupola and the pointed arches which support it.

The front of the temple shows a face gradually rising from the sides to the middle, and flanked by two towers which rise rather higher than the roof. The tower to the front presents a face showing three arches of the pointed form one above the other supporting a pointed dome . . . Above each of the doorways is a large square, of equal breadth with the doorway, containing a device which at first sight looks remarkably like "the lion and the unicorn fighting for the crown." It is, however, intended to represent two lions supporting a chalice. The spaces between the sides of the arches and the squares above the doorways are also ornamented. The whole face of the building, and partly also of the towers, is one mass of tracery and figured ornament The sculptured squares, of which there must be about fifty on this front face, represent each an episode in Krishna's life. The figures in them, as well as the rest of the ornament, are done in relief on the brick-work of the building, the bricks being sculptured either before or after burning. The figures are very well done, and the tracery is all perfectly regular, having none of the slipshod style which too often characterizes native art in these districts. The sides of the building present much the same appearance as the front, but, instead of three doorways and two spaces, they have five doorways. Within the doorways, both in front and at the sides, is a verandah, and the entrance to the temple is from this verandah, the image of Krishna being inside. The whole temple is raised on a pedestal, whose floor is some three feet above the soil; and temple, pedestal, and all are still in very good order though signs of decay are showing themselves."

On the top of the lowest arch of the tower, a small round stone let into the face of the brick-work bears a dedicatory inscription written in the Sanskrit language, with Bengali letters. The inscription, which is written in four lines of Prakriti metre, is as follows:—"In the Saka year counted by arrow-pair-limb-moon, desirous of gratifying Krishna, Sītārāma Raya, who is like a resplendent sun of the lotus of the family to which attaches the great name of Biswās (*i.e.*, who casts a lustre on the great Biswās family, to which Sītārām belonged, as the sun casts a lustre on the lotus), erected in his devotion this splendid house of Krishna within Yadupatinagar, a city filled with innumerable mansions and (so beautiful that it) deprives of beauty that which is beautiful." Yadupati and Kanhaya are both synonyms for Krishna; Yadupatinagar is accordingly made, for metrical reasons, to do service for Kanhayanagar, the name of the village within which this temple is situated. The date remains to be explained. "Arrow" refers to the five arrows of Cupid; "Pair" stands fo

two ; "Limb" means six, as Hindus enumerate six limbs; and "Moon" one, as there is only one moon. The year therefore is 1625 Saka, which began in April 1703 A.D.

The building which looks into the same square, facing southward, is the temple of Balarāma. It has no architectural pretensions, being in the shape of two native huts placed alongside each other; the front one being a verandah with three arches and the one farther back being the abode of Balarāma. The building on the east side of the square, and facing west, is a much finer one than the last, though not nearly so good as the temple of Krishna. Its frontage shows three doors, the centre one being higher than the other two, and all being of the pointed arch shape. They are each surmounted by a square containing in relief the same device as on the temple of Krishna, viz., two lions and a cup. The top of this building is composed of three domes all of the pointed form and finished off with pinnacles, the central dome being higher than the two side ones. Between the doors, and across the top of the face, there is a good deal of tracery-work executed in relief in the brickwork. An octagonal building closes the square on the south. It was the place for keeping the vessels which belonged to the service of the idols of these buildings, which were all erected by Sītārām. The three-domed temple last mentioned is almost torn asunder by the *pipal* trees that have taken root in it, and a portion of the temple of Krishna has fallen down; but what remains still attests its architectural beauty. A little to the west of the village of Kanhayanagar is another of Sītārām's large tanks, the Krishna Sāgar, so named from the god of the temple. This is a fine tank about half the size of the Rām Sāgar and still in good condition.

Mukimpur Estate.—A large estate comprising the Mukimpur *pargana* in the east of the Narāil subdivision and extending also across the river into the Farīdpur district. Its headquarters are at Chāndpur, a small place 4 miles south-east of Lakshmīpāsā. The founder of the family which at present possesses Mukimpur was one Prit Rām, who acquired much wealth by trade and bought the zamīndāri shortly after it was sold up as part of the Nātor estate. The story of his acquisition of the estate is as follows. A large cloth warehouse of the East India Company in Calcutta was in charge of two *sarkārs*, Sibrām Sānyāl and Dulāl Sarkār. The warehouse having been burnt down, the Government officials condemned the burnt cloth, and ordered it to be sold to the highest bidder. The Sarkārs alone made a bid and got it for Rs. 16,000. When they came to sell it, they found that beneath the surface there was much good

cloth, and they realized seven or eight lakhs by the sale. With his share of the proceeds Sibrām purchased Mukimpur, but this proved an unprofitable investment. Mukimpur was swept by floods, and in the whole *pargana* there was only one holding which could pay its way, and that was Prit Rām's holding of Rs. 1,000. Sibrām Sānyāl, therefore, seeing no hope of paying the Government revenue of Rs. 19,000, sold the *pargana* to Prit Rām for that sum. Fortunately for the purchaser the inundations now began to decrease, and the immense quantities of silt brought by the river began to raise the land. The *pargana* thus became more and more fertile, and the estate became a valuable one. Prit Rām was succeeded by his son Rājchandra, and the latter by his widow Rāsmanī Dāsi, commonly known as Rānī Rāsmanī, who, it is said, died possessed of an income of 6 lakhs. After her death, the property was divided in five shares among her grandsons. The principal share fell to the late Bābu Trailakya Nāth Biswās, on whose death in 1903, the property passed to his sons; on the death of his eldest son in 1904, it was placed under the management of the Court of Wards. The present proprietors of the estate are Nritya Gopāl Biswās, Mohan Gopāl Biswās, and Srīmatī Sindhu Bālā Dāsi (wife of the eldest brother), who hold an eight annas share, and Babu Amrita Lāl Dās, who holds the remaining eight annas share. The rent-roll of the Wards estate is Rs. 1,60,000, and it pays Rs. 53,000 as Government revenue and rent to superior landlords. There are two cutcherries in the Narāil subdivision, viz., the Court of Wards cutcherry at Chāndpur and that of Amrita Lāl Dās at Amritanagar (called also Naragānthi). A survey and settlement of the portion of the estate lying in the Jessore district is almost complete.

Naldāngā.—A village in the Jessore subdivision, situated 2 miles from Kālīganj (with which it is connected by a metalled road), 9 miles from Jhenida and 20 miles from Jessore. The village contains a postal-telegraph office, and also a dispensary and High school, which are maintained by the Rājā of Naldāngā. It includes in its area four villages, viz., Naldāngā proper, Matbāti, Kadipur and Ganjanagar. Matbāti contains 8 old temples dedicated to the gods and goddesses of the Naldāngā family. The residence of the Rājā of Naldāngā is in the village Ganjanagar, which stands on the river Benga or Begbati and contains a large edifice called the Chandimandap, which is set apart for the annual worship of the goddess Durgā. There are three legends of some interest connected with the place. The first is that, in days gone by, there was at Matbāti a temple dedicated to the goddess Kālī,

with an altar (called the Pancha Mundi Bedi) under which were buried the head of a Chandāl woman, a monkey, a cat, a mongoose, and a jackal. It is said that several Brāhmans who tried to worship the goddess, were hurled by evil spirits at the dead of night to the opposite side of the Kālīkātalā Daha, a big deep pool below the temple. At last, one Bhairab Bhattacharjya, an ardent devotee of the goddess, succeeded in worshipping her there throughout the whole night. The second legend relates that, about a century ago, the sound of musical instruments used for worship, such as the conch, bell and gong, used to be heard at midnight in the Kālīkātalā Daha by fishermen fishing in the pool. The people of the locality believe that this sound showed that the goddess Kālī was worshipped by the water deities residing in the pool The third legend is that Rājā Indra Nārāyan Deb Rai, one of the ancestors of the Naldāngā family, built a beautiful temple at Matbāti under the directions of Brahmananda Giri, the spiritual guide of the family ; this temple was called Indreswarī after the name of its founder. After his death, the ascetic Brahmananda appeared one night to his son Surjya Nārāyan and directed him to follow him to the temple of Indreswarī. Surjya Nārāyan obeyed the Giri, sanctified the idol, and ordered it to be called thenceforth by the name of Siddheswarī. After this, it is said, the ascetic went down into the Kālīkātalā Daha and never rose again.

The Naldāngā Rāj family has set apart a portion of their zamīndāri called Iswarbrithi to meet the expenses of the daily worship of the idols at Matbāti and of feeding any uninvited guests who may happen to be present there at breakfast time. The Durgā Pūjā is celebrated every year at the Rājbāti with great pomp, and the Rāj family religiously keeps up other old Hindu customs, *e.g.*, the old system of teaching boys free of all cost by the establishment of *Chatuspāthis*, the grant of pensions and of rent-free lands to Brāhmans etc.

Naldāngā Rāj.—The Naldāngā family trace back their descent to a Brāhman named Haladhar Bhattacharji, who about 450 years ago lived in Bhabrasuba, a village in the district of Dacca. His descendant in the fifth generation, Bishnu Dās Hāzrā, settled some three hundred years ago at Kharāsani, a village in the neighbourhood of Naldāngā, which was then full of reeds (whence the name). There he lived the life of a hermit, and Kharāsani is still known as Hazrābāti after him. This hermit is said to have possessed supernatural powers, and once miraculously supplied the Nawāb and his retinue with food when he was returning from a visit to Dacca. The Nawāb's supplies

had run short, he was in the middle of an almost uninhabited jungle, and he and his men were in great straits. The hermit asked each person to name what he desired, and then gave them all the food they wanted, causing it suddenly to come out of the ground before them. The Nawāb, to show his gratitude, bestowed upon Bishnu Dās five adjacent villages, and these formed the nucleus of the Naldāngā zamīndāri. Bishnu Dās had a son named Srīmanta Rai, who from his great prowess obtained the name of Ranbīr Khān. He was a warrior rather than a saint, and having put to death the Afghān zamīndārs of Kotchāndpur, took possession of their estates and established his residence at Naldāngā. This event may perhaps be put down as occurring in the second half of the sixteenth century. The title of Rājā was first conferred by the Nawāb on Chandi Charan Deb Rai, the third in descent from Ranbīr Khān, who followed his example by putting to death one Rajā Kedāreswar and taking possession of his zamīndāri, after which he became the sole master of *pargana* Muhammadshāhi. Chandi Charan's son was Rājā Indra Nārāyan Deb Rai, during whose time the idol Siddheswarī, previously called Indreswarī, was brought from Benāres and placed in the temple at Matbāti. The family now increased in number, and small portions o the zamīndāri were distributed among the minor members of the family. The main branch, however, retained the title of Rājā and kept in its possession the major portion of the zamīndāri.

In 1737, the then Rājā, Raghu Deb Rai, having failed to pay his revenue to the Nawāb, was dispossessed of his lands, which were made over to the Rājā of Nātor, but was reinstated three or four years later on his promising to pay up all arrears. His successor Krishna Deb Rai died leaving three sons, Govinda Deb Rai, Mahendra Deb Rai and Rām Sankar Deb Rai, among whom the estate was divided in 1777. Govinda Deb Rai got a one-fifth (3 annas 4 gandās) share of the estate and was called the Tināni Rājā, while the other two brothers, Mahendra and Rām Sankar, each received two-fifths and were respectively called the Bara Rājā and the Chota Rājā. The Tināni Rājā and the Bara Rājā soon lost their property, which was purchased at auction sales for arrears of revenue, first by Bābu Rādhā Mohan Banerji of Salikha and then by Bābu Rām Ratan Rai of Narāil. The descendants of the Chota Rājā Rām Sankar have, however, held their own and increased their property.

Rām Sankar Deb Rai was succeeded by Sashi Bhusan Deb Rai, who enlarged his zamīndarī by purchasing an eight annas share of *taraf* Sachani, Pratāppur, Kanejpur and Kustabaria,

His son Indu Bhushan, who was distinguished for his charity received the title of Rājā and died in 1870. The present representative of his family is his son Pramatha Bhushan Deb Rai, who was granted the title of Rājā in 1885 and has two sons, Kumār Pannaga Bhushan and Mrigānka Bhushan Deb Rai. The estate is scattered over the districts of Jessore, Nadiā and Farīdpur, and its gross yearly income is reported to be Rs. 2,60,481. The annual Government revenue and the rent paid to superior landlords amount to Rs. 51,116 and Rs. 94,116, respectively, the cess payable to Government annually being Rs. 11,573, while the rent paid to superior landlords is Rs. 5,395. Thus the total amount annually paid by the estate in the shape of Government revenue, rents and cesses comes to Rs. 1,62,200.

Naldi.—A village in the Narāil subdivision, situated 11 miles north of Narāil. It is a place of some antiquity and must formerly have been of importance, for the large *pargana* of Naldi was called after it. It contains a temple with an old idol called Kālāchāud, and a market is held twice a week.

Naldi Estate.—An estate comprising the *pargana* of Naldi, which occupies the northern half of the Narāil subdivision and also part of the M·gurā subdivision. The whole *pargana* belongs to the Paikpārā family, one of whose ancestors, Prān Krishna Singh, purchased it about 1798 on the disintegration of the Nātor estate. The head-quarters cutcherry of the estate was formerly at Muhammadpur, but this place was deserted after 1836, when it was decimated by fever, and a new cutcherry was built at Lakshmīpāsā. The family is said to have been founded 40 generations ago by Anādibar Singh, one of whose descendants, Hara Krishna Singh (born about 1650 A.D.), acquired great wealth under the Muhammadan Government. His son Bihāri Singh had four sons, of whom the two youngest, Rādhā Govinda Singh and Gangā Singh, played a prominent part in the revenue history of Bengal, when it was acquired by the British Government. Rādhā Govinda Singh was a revenue officer under Alī Vardi Khān and Sirāj-ud-Daula, and when the British undertook the *Diwāni* of Bengal, he was rewarded for his services by the grant of a *sayar mahāl* or right of collecting octroi in Hooghly. The family still draw Rs. 3,698 per annum from Hooghly, the compensation given them for the resumption of this *sayar* in 1790.* The other brother Gangā Govinda Singh was *Diwān* of the East India Company under Warren Hastings and spent large sums on social and religious ceremonies, especially his mother's *srāddha*. On this latter ceremony a fabulous sum is

* Sir J. Westland's Report on the District of Jessore.

said to have been spent; the family manager puts it down at 2 crores of rupees, while in Sir James Westland's Report on the District of Jessore it is put down at 20 lakhs. He left his family destitute, but his son Prān Krishna Singh, whom he placed in charge of his brother Rādhā Govinda Singh, was, as already stated, able to acquire the Naldi estate Prān Krishna had a son Krishna Chandra Singh, better known as Lālā Bābu, who was born in 1775 A. D. and addedl argely to the estate. He eventually became an ascetic and took up his residence at Brindāban where he was distinguished for his liberality and piety. Lālā Bābu's son was Srī Nārāyan, who was succeeded by his adopted son Pratāp Chandra Singh. The latter helped to found the British Indian Association, of which he was a Vice-President, received the title of Rājā Bahādur, and was made a C. S. I. He died in 1868, and the present proprietor of the estate is his son Kumār Sarat Chandra Singh. The gross assets of the estate are reported to be Rs. 11,34,844; it is situated in 18 districts, but the principal properties lie in Noākhāli and Jessore.

Narāil.—Head-quarters of the subdivision of the same name, situated 22 miles east of Jessore on the Chitrā river, which is here very deep and affords a regular route for large boats throughout the year. Population (1911) 863. The town extends for a mile along the river banks with the subdivisional offices at the northern extremity. There are also a Munsif's court, a sub-registry office, two dispensaries, a postal-telegraph office, two High schools and a college. The latter, which is called the Victoria College, was founded as a High school by Bābu Rām Ratan Rai of the Narāil zamīndāri family, and was raised to the status of a college in 1886. The bazar at Narāil was established by Ruprām, one of the ancestors of the Narāil family, and the market place is named Rupganj after him. Two bi-weekly markets are held, one in the bazar on Sundays and Thursdays and the other at a smaller market place on Mondays and Fridays.

Narāil has been the head-quarters of a subdivision since 1861. The subdivision was one of those which were started during the indigo disturbances, and its first site was Gopālganj, which is on the Farīdpur bank of the Madhumatī, just above the separation of the Athārabanka. Thence it was brought to Bhatiapārā, opposite Lohāgarā, thence to Lohāgarā (which was then a Munsifi), thence to Kumārganj, opposite Naldi, and finally a permanent site was chosen at Narāil.

Narāil Estate.—A large estate owned by one of the leading families of the district. The family claim to be descended from

Purushottam Datta of the story of king Adisur, and at the beginning of the eighteenth century they dwelt at Bally (Bāli) near Howrah. To escape the Marāthā incursions, they first retreated to a village called Chaurā, near Murshidābād, and afterwards, when Madan Gopāl was head of the family, to Narāil. Madan Gopāl had amassed some wealth in the Nawab's service, with which he established a mercantile business. His grandson, Rūprām Datta, became agent at the Nawāb's Court for the Rājā of Nātor, from whom he obtained in 1791 a lease of land in Jessore, for which he paid rent of Rs. 148 a year. Rūprām died in 1802, leaving two sons Kālīsankar and Rāmnidhi. Kālīsankar, a man of great energy and force of character, commenced life with an estate of a few hundred *bighās* near Narāil, and when he died, left a large property. Through his father's connection with the Nator family, he became farmer, under the Rājā of Nātor, of the Bhushnā zamīndāri. Soon after the time of the Permanent Settlement, the Rājā's estates of Telihāti, Binodpur, Rūpāpāt, Kāliā, and Poktāni were sold for default of payment of revenue, a result apparently brought about by Kālīsankar, who in 1795 and 1799 bought them up in the names of obscure individuals, his dependants. In 1800 he was imprisoned for arrears on his Bhushnā farm, but though able to pay revenue for his *benāmi* property, he preferred to remain four years in jail rather than make good his debt on account of Bhushnā. He was afterwards released on a compromise, by which a portion of the arrears were remitted. He then lived with his son, Rām Nārāyan and Jay Nārāyan in Narāil, and retired in 1820 to Benāres, where he continued to amass landed property up to his death in 1834, both of his sons having died before him. Kālīsankar received the title of Rai from the Nawāb of Murshidābād, and the family now use it as a surname in place of their patronymic of Datta.

When Kālīsankar died, he left as his heirs the son of Rām Nārāyan and the sons of Jay Nārāyan, who henceforth formed two branches of the family. After his death, Gurudās, Jay Nārāyan's son, instituted a law suit, claiming a half share of the whole of the family possessions, against the elder branch of the family, represented by Rām Ratan, the eldest son of Rām Nārāyan. Rām Ratan on his side produced a will, and contended that the larger share of the estates had been given to the elder branch. In the lower court Gurudās lost his suit, but the decision was reversed in the High Court. After this the case was carried on appeal to the Privy Council, and was decided, in 1876, in Gurudās's favour. He had, however, died two years previously, and before the result of the appeal to the Privy

Council became known, his son, Govinda Chandra, had accepted an amicable settlement, by which he withdrew his claim against Rām Ratan's heirs on receiving landed property, yielding a rental of Rs. 12,000, besides a sum of Rs. 40,000 in cash.

Rām Ratan, the representative of the elder (Narāil) branch, extended the property considerably and acquired a three-fifths share of Muhammadshāhi. He died in 1859 or 1860, and his brother Rai Bahādur Harnāth Rai became the head of the family. On the death of the latter in 1868, Rādhā Charan Rai, third son of Rām Nārāyan Rai, succeeded. At present the property is held by six co-sharers, viz, Rāj Kumār Rai, Govinda Prasanna Rai, Bijan Bihāri Rai, Kiran Chandra Rai, Narendra Rai and Jogendra Nāth Rai. The foremost member of the family is reported to be Bābu Jogendra Nāth Rai, who resides at Cossipore, the other family residence being at Narāil. The family has long been noted for acts of liberality and piety. They have endowed temples, dug several tanks upon their estates, and have constructed other works of public utility. The Narāil property, which is reported to yield a gross income of about six or seven lakhs, extends over the Jhenida subdivision and the western part of the Māgurā subdivision, running also into Nadiā, Pābnā, and Farīdpur. There are likewise large estates belonging to the family in Hooghly, the 24-Parganas, Backergunge, Benāres and Calcutta. Their estates lie chiefly in the following *parganas* and *tarafs*:—(1) *Parganas* Telihāti and Dhuldi in Farīdpur; (2) *Pargana* Muhammadshāhi, which extends into several districts, but lies chiefly in the Jhenida and Māgurā subdivisions of this district; (3) *Pargana* Yusufpur (Isafpur) and *taraf* Rasūlpur in the districts of Jessore and Khulnā; this property is mostly held in *patnī*; (4) *Pargana* Belgāchhi, which consists chiefly of *tāluks*; (5) *Pargana* Dantia in Khulnā; (6) *Pargana* Birmohan in Farīdpur; (7) *Taraf* Dariāpur in *pargana* Naldi in the Jessore district. The junior branch founded by Gurudās Rai, which is known as the Hātbariā family, owns the following properties:—(1) *Taraf* Kāliā in Jessore district; (2) *Taraf* Rūpāpāt and *pargana* Poktāni in Farīdpur district; (3) Lot Uzirpur Patnī under the Naldi Rāj; (4) *Taraf* Nagirat in Muhammadshāhi *pargana*; and (5) *Pargana* Dhuldi in Farīdpur.

Narāil Subdivision.—South-eastern subdivision of the district lying between 22° 58′ and 23° 21′ N. and between 89° 23′ and 89° 50′ E., with an area of 487 square miles. The subdivision boarders on the Farīdpur district, and is lower than

other parts of the district. The process of land formation has not yet ceased, and it receives occasional deposits of silt. It is less unhealthy than other parts of Jessore, and the soil is very fertile. It abounds in deep marshes and its principal rivers, which are tidal, are navigable throughout the year. Its population was 360,509 in 1911, and with 740 persons to the square mile it is the most thickly populated part of the district.

Naopārā.—A village in the Jessore subdivision, situated on the Bhairab, 6 miles south of Singia. It is a trade centre of some local importance, and is known to have been a prominent market place at the time of the Permanent Settlement, when it went by the name of Alīnagar. The present name is said to be due to the numerous boats frequenting the place.

Nawāpārā.—A village situated 2 miles north-west of Jessore. It is the head-quarters of a family of zamīndārs known as the Nawapārā Bābus, who trace back their descent to one Harideb Deb, who lived near Sātgāon in the Hooghly district. Purandar Deb, the eighth in descent from him, is said to have held high office under the Mughal rulers, from whom he received the title of Khān, while the Kulin Kāyasths conferred on him the title of Gastipati. The seventh in descent from Purandar was Rām Chandra Khān, who acquired the zamīndāri of Muhammadābād in Nadiā and made his head-quarters at Bara Bazar. His grandson Kamal Nārāyan transferred it to Bodhkhāna, while one of the latter's sons, named Rājā Kansa Nārāyan Rai, removed it to Gangānandapur in Nadiā. His son Ratneswar quarrelled with the Rājā of Nadiā, who in the end dispossessed him of his estates about 1735 A.D. Being unable to obtain redress at the Court of Murshidābād, Ratneswar retired to Nawapārā, possessed of only a few *tāluks* and *lākhirāj* lands. "The history of the family," writes Sir James Westland, "deserves further elucidation. They appear to be one of those families who, in the time of the large zamīndārs, possessed the small zamīndāris, single *parganas*, or similar estates, and were therefore a prey to their larger and more wealthy neighbours. They are nowhere prominent in the history of the district, and in its records I find no mention of them. Their ancient history is, I am inclined to think, something quite apart from their modern history, and they are an instance where one of the zamīndāri families of modern days happens to be also a representative of a family that had possessions in olden times. The Rājā of Jessore, in his account of his history, mentions that this

Nawapārā family owe their present position to their connection with his house, Kālikant Rai's elder brothers having been *naibs* upon his estates. This is perfectly possible, for, as their entire property is composed of petty zamīndāris and *patnī* and *darpatnī* tenures, it is undoubtedly of modern acquisition, and is, in continuity of history at any rate, entirely separate from what their family originally may have possessed."

Sāgardāri.—A village and steamer station, situated on the banks of the Kabadak. It is noteworthy as being the birthplace of the well known poet and dramatist, Madhu Sudan Datta, who has been described as the greatest literary genius produced by Bengal during the nineteenth century. Here also was born Srimati Mānkumāri Devi, a niece of the poet and an authoress who wrote several Bengal poems.

Sailkupa.—A village in the Jhenida subdivision, situated on the north bank of the Kumār river, 12 miles north of Jhenida. It contains a thāna, sub-registry office, a flourishing High school, a post office, a Middle English school and some Primary schools. It is also a considerable trade centre, at which rice from Farīdpur and mustard, linseed, jute and pulses grown locally are sold in large quantities. The idol Rāmgopāl in this village is held in great veneration.

Tahirpur.—A village in the Jessore subdivision, situated at the confluence of the Bhairab and Kabadak about 6 miles north of Chaugāchhā. It contains a large sugar factory which was built by the late Mr Newhouse in 1854. It passed through the hands of many European merchants and was, for a time, converted into a rum distillery. But this industry did not pay, and sugar manufacture was resumed by a company, which, however, soon afterwards failed. It then became the property of Rai Dhanapat Singh Bahādur, by whom the manufacture of sugar was again undertaken. In 1910 an Indian company began to repair the factory with the intention of refining sugar with the latest machinery, but the work is now (1911) at a standstill. The curing of tobacco was also started here by Mr. McLeod of Kotchāndpur, but was given up in 1907.

Trimohini.—A village in the Jessore subdivision, situated 5 miles west of Keshabpur, with which it is connected by road It was formerly an important seat of the sugar trade, but was in course of time completely overshadowed by Keshabpur. Till of late years, however, it had several sugar refineries, but they are now all closed; and at present Trimohini is little more than an ordinary market village, where undrained sugar is brought for sale and not for refining. A *melā* or fair is held here every March

at the time of the Bāruṇī or bathing festival. Half a mile from Trimohini, on the road to Keshabpur is Mīrzānagar (*q.v.*), the residence of the Mughal *Faujdārs* or Military Governors of Jessore.

Ulāsi.—A village in the Jessore subdivision. It is the birth-place of Madhusudhan Kān, founder of the system of *jātra dhap*.

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